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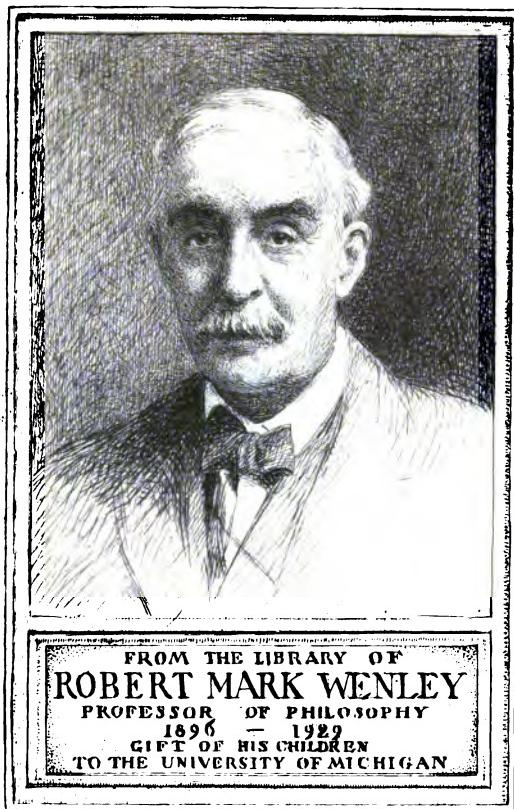
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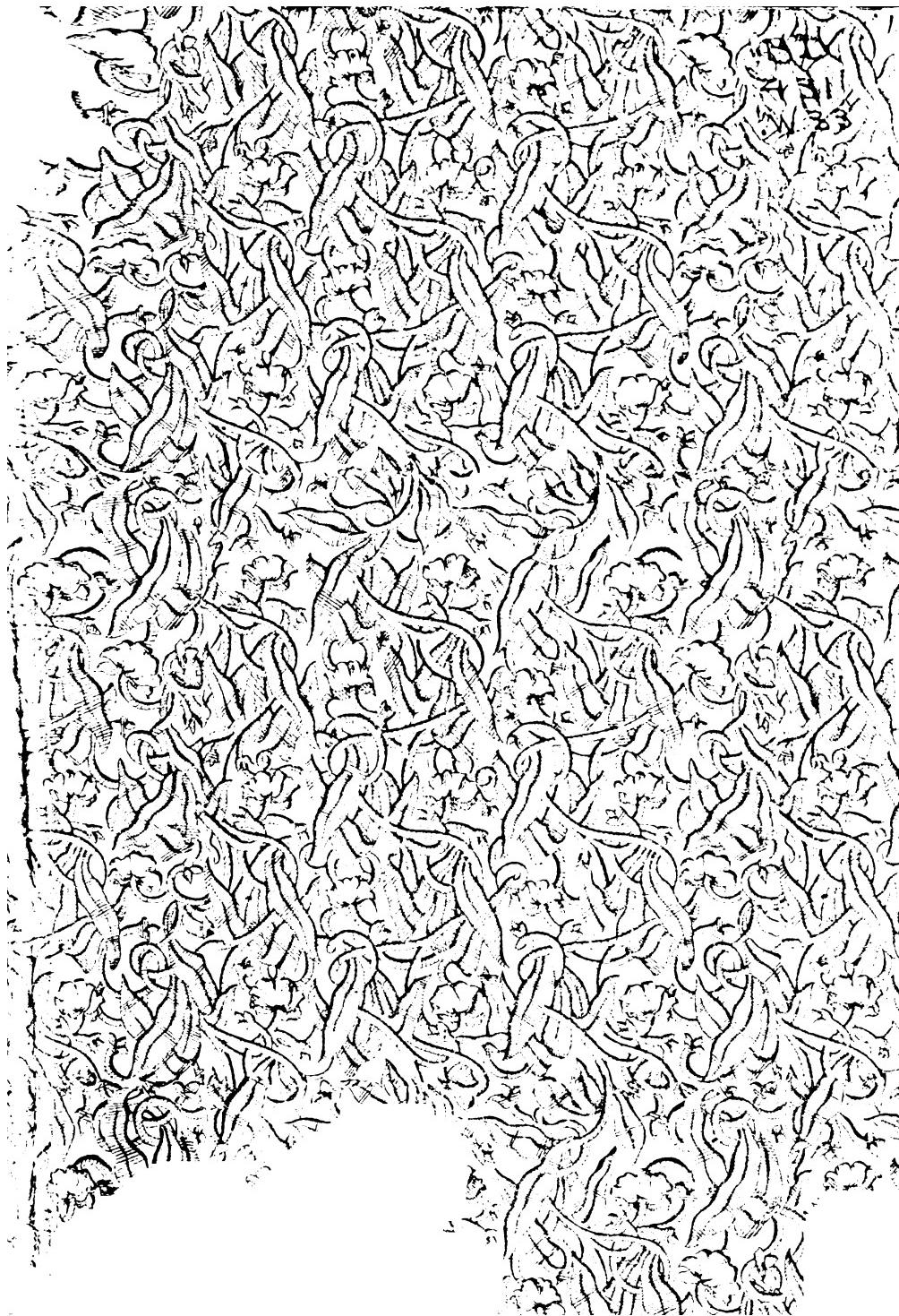
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# INSIGNIA VITÆ

OR

## BROAD PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

*FIVE ESSAYS ON LIFE AND CHARACTER*



BY  
**C. H. WATERHOUSE, B.A., M.D.**  
AUTHOR OF "SIGNIFICATION AND PRINCIPLES OF ART"

LONDON

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*To His Excellency*

**ALFRED RITTER BECHER VON RÜDENHOF,**

*Feldmarschall-Lieutenant of the Imperial  
Austrian Army.*

*Permit me to crave your Excellency's kind indulgence to allow  
your name to stand at the beginning of this volume.*

*To whom, indeed, could I more fitly inscribe the following  
pages than to your Excellency; with whom they must ever be  
associated as the souvenir of many a friendly chat on the subjects  
therein treated of.*

*Moreover, a welcome opportunity is thus afforded me of making  
some acknowledgment, however inadequate, of your Excellency's  
cordiality, rare good sense, and unfailing friendship.*

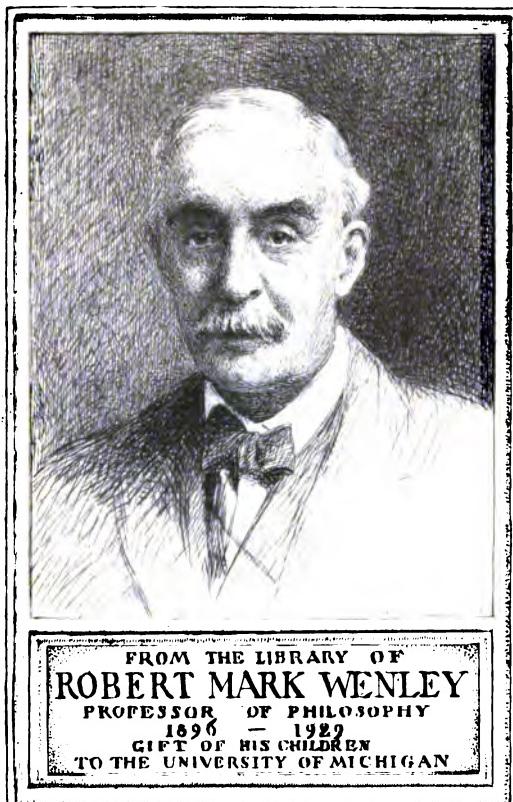
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*In profound esteem,*

*Your Excellency's ever grateful and obliged,*

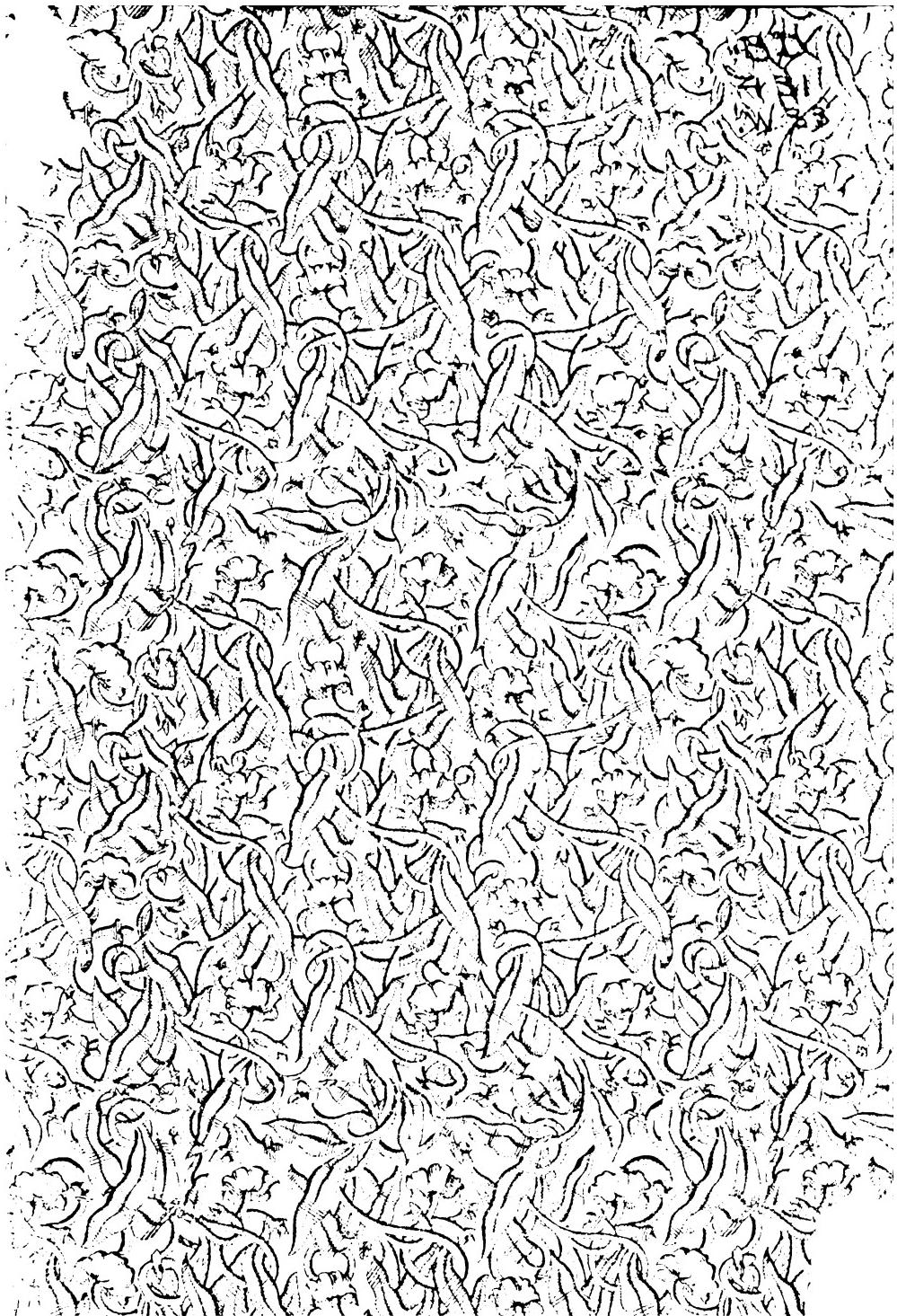
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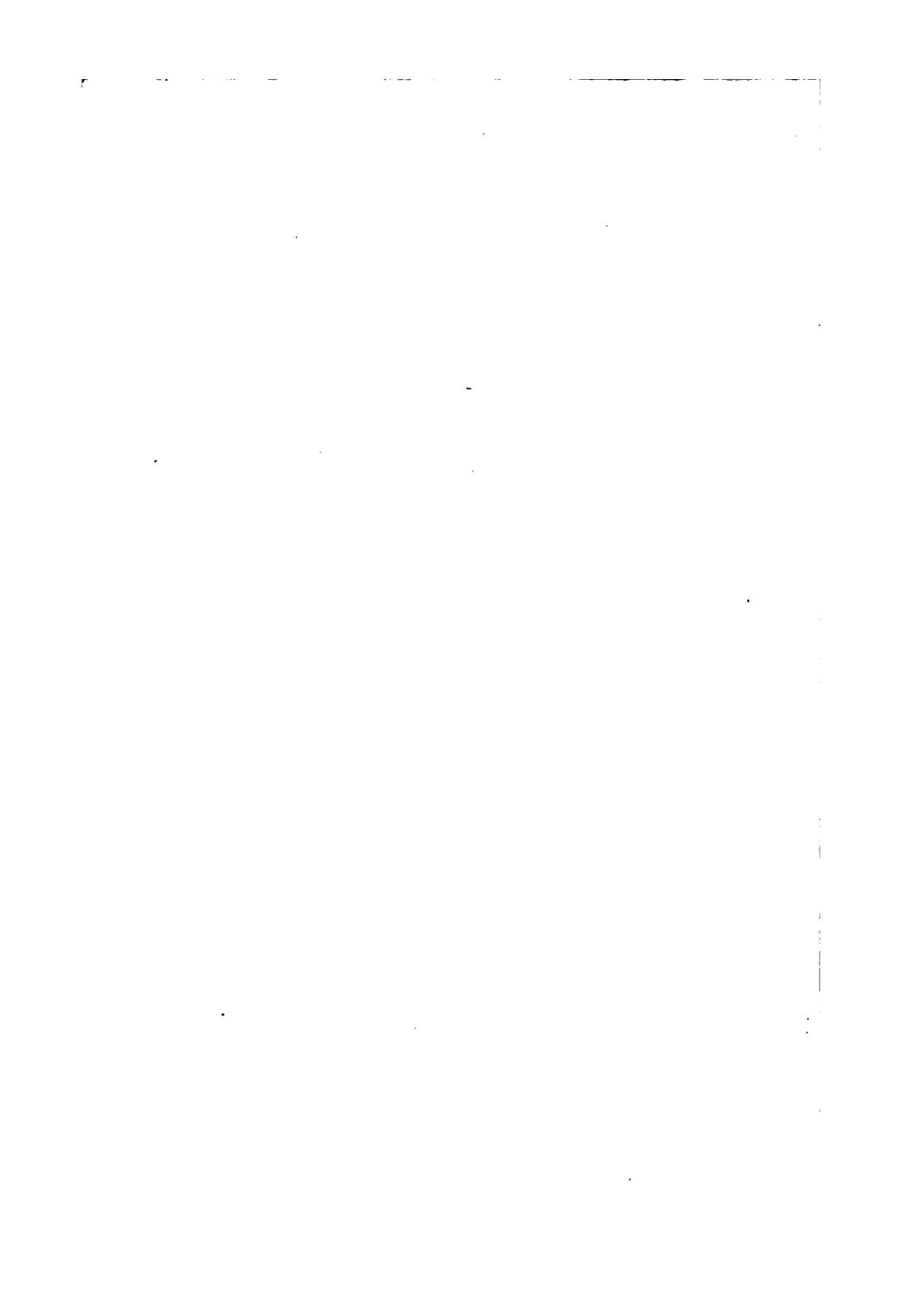
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I.

*NATURE'S PLAN  
IN THE LIFE OF MAN.*

B

*" . . . God, whose pleasure brought  
Man into being, stands away  
As it were a handbreadth off, to give  
Room for the newly-made to live,  
And look at him from a place apart,  
And use his gifts of brain and heart."*

ROBERT BROWNING.

I.

## Nature's Plan in the Life of Man.

---

### I.—LEADING CHARACTERISTIC OF FORCE SPECIFIED.

“THE craft with which the world is made runs also into the mind and character of man.” Nature is older than man, and if we would gain a just conception of human life we must begin with nature, we must consult nature's plan. But what that plan is can be ascertained only through the working of the human mind ; for nature has no voice or speech of her own, but finds a tongue in man.

A thousand impressions have besieged the mind as men looked forth upon the vast and amazing panorama unfolded in creation's works ; what has been the deepest and most lasting ? Amid all this medley, what has, beyond aught else, stamped itself as nature's insignia—her mark, by which she may be recognized and known ?

A quaint symbol of old—very far away in point of time, but, for all that, very apt for our present purpose —shall make reply ; we mean, namely, *the circle fashioned like a serpent coiled round and biting its tail*. This was an emblem of the universe, and under this figure it was, doubtless, intended to express the truth that nature knows no pause ; that she ends only to

begin again ; that the relic of the past is the germ of the future, the grave a cradle for a new birth ; hence the annular, tail-biting serpent, without beginning and without end.

Indeed, the very name which men have employed to denote the truth alluded to, carries its meaning on the face of it. As man thinks so he speaks ; his thought is mirrored in language ; and hence the name *Natura*, meaning literally, that which is *going to be* ; something which waits upon the future for its full fruition, and, therefore, by implication, something which is, for the time being, wanting and *incomplete*—something which is *not yet*.

Now, strange as it may at first sight seem, it becomes manifest on reflection that it is to this very *not yet*, or element of incompleteness, that an opportunity—and, indeed, the bare possibility—for the display of any and every kind of force, is in reality owing.

To illustrate this by a reference to living organisms : let it be observed that as long as there is life there must of necessity be a falling short of completeness or perfection. Mineral matter is something alien to the nature of plant-life, yet it is by means of it that the plant grows and is nourished. “The whole office of matter is to feed life—to feed the green rushes and the roses which are about to be.” But, plainly, by as much as there is mineral matter in the plant, by just so much is there less vegetable matter, the plant is not complete—is not all plant ; nevertheless, it is just this minus not-plant element which gives the very condition of its life and growth. The same observation is also applicable to every kind of living structure.

And so also, to speak in more general terms, it is by reason of the fact that certain forces and affinities are

*not yet satisfied, but are still seeking their satisfaction—* it is for this very reason that terrestrial energy becomes manifest and known. Whether it be the crystal which grows by the drawing together of kindred atoms, or whether it be an aerolite, which straying too near the earth's atmosphere is deflected from its course and straightway hastens to the centre of attraction, the truth is one and the same—the exhibition of force coming into view through a condition of unbalanced or unsatisfied affinities. Were it otherwise, were there no unsatisfied want in the universe, the very meaning and idea of force would have remained for ever unknown.

We have only to observe what takes place in every case in which the want (if we may so express it) of cosmic forces has been appeased, to see that this is so, for then all sign and trace of activity does, in point of fact, escape our notice. Such a condition characterizes the great bulk of the globe. And if the curious spectacle of geological strata tells of an activity which has been in the past, it is a "tale long told"; the drama has been played out; all activity has long ago come to a standstill; we see nothing but the locked embrace of forces which have found their quietus and are at rest. This dreary and universal petrifaction of the inorganic world may well be called *dead* in comparison with the flora which bursts into blossom every spring, or the warmth and animation of animal life.

But the real nature of things does not lie on the surface—rather is it to be discovered in their inward and secret parts; hence it is in the behaviour of the minute and invisible particles or atoms of which the world is made that the significance of cosmic energy becomes fully apparent. The detonations and explosions caused by the union of certain chemical substances (*i.e.*, matter

in a state of fine division) testifies to the extraordinary avidity with which such unions take place. The evolution of heat when lime is slaked tells the same story, and seems so suggestive, indeed, of the appeasing of an appetite that we even borrow the term for our own use, and speak of *slaking* the thirst. Now all the heat and noise and commotion manifested at such junctures betrays the impetuosity and haste with which, circumstances favouring, the molecules of certain substances rush into each other's embrace.

In chemical parlance the union here referred to is called "saturation"; and it is an axiom in chemistry that bodies which are free to unite seek to do so, thus forming saturated compounds. Carbonic acid, or the union of oxygen with carbon, is such a compound, and since these two substances play a very important rôle in the economy of life we may refer to this matter somewhat in detail.

It is well known how a plant grows—that by means of the chlorophyll in its leaves it feeds, so to speak, upon the carbon which exists in an invisible form in the circumambient air, and adding this to itself grows in visible shape and stature. It is well known also that plants must have light if they are to thrive, that the co-operation of the sun's rays is essential to the business. The reason of this is not quite clear, but it is believed that the action of solar light and heat upon the carbonic acid molecule is such as to weaken the bond, to throw the partners somewhat out of harmony, and that it is under these circumstances—divided counsels always play into the enemy's hand—the plant is able to capture the carbon moiety, and to detain it a prisoner in its tissues.

But this act of appropriation on the part of the plant

is nothing less than an act of spoliation as regards the carbonic acid molecule ; it is, that is to say, the forcible rending of a previous tie. Now the sundering of ties involves a very important consideration—the consideration, namely, that whenever a chance of reunion occurs this will most assuredly be turned to account. If the plant achieves its object, and satisfies its want in growing, this is not by any means the end of the matter, for, a new want has been created thereby ; the oxygen atom—ousted from the old partnership—will not rest satisfied till the former state of things be restored.

One proof that this really is so is seen in what takes place during the combustion of fuel—for burning means nothing more nor less than the uniting of carbon and oxygen. The lost tie is, therefore, recovered ; those identical atoms of carbon which had been captured by the plant are now once again restored to their old alliance with oxygen, and are again at liberty to pursue their course in the paths of the air in the form of carbonic acid gas. But the same resumption of partnership may be seen under very different auspices. If it is sometimes inaugurated by the hot haste of the leaping, scorching flame, it may, on the other hand, come to pass in that slow and almost imperceptible oxidation of vegetable decay which gives the forest its autumn tints, and sends the pale will-o'-the-wisp dancing over the morass. And yet once more, and this time in connection with weightier issues, may the same union be traced. For if the plant unties, the animal does just the opposite, it unites. So that, turning now to the animal organism, we may observe how this self-same carbon, now introduced into the system as food, and meeting here with the oxygen inhaled in breathing,

again finds an occasion for recovering the lost tie. This accordingly takes place, and carbonic acid gas is once more restored to the atmosphere to repeat the same cycle of events.

In the interim, however, much has happened, all indeed that is significant of the phenomena of animal life. Between its entering in and its going forth carbon has served a most important purpose, for it is by very reason of that interchange and rearrangement of the particles forming the substance of living structures that a disengagement of force takes place, and thus is provided the wherewithal, the physical basis of operation, for all the varied capacities and powers of animals and men.

An idea may thus be gained of the function which carbon fulfils in giving a home to force, a body in which force may be lodged, an instrument with which it may work—"dead particles resolving themselves into the living case of life." In and out of this habitation of life do the atoms perpetually advance and retire, incessantly shifting and replacing each other, now in earth and air, now in the living tissues of animal or plant.

Be it observed, furthermore, that the life or force is not *in* the atoms—these physical particles of matter are in themselves as inert and dead as any rock—but it is *by means* of them. When coal is burnt the resulting heat and light is due to the precipitancy and eager haste with which carbon and oxygen coalesce, but these two substances do not perish or suffer in the act; *they* do not change, but remain exactly the same in weight and character as they float away together in the form of carbonic acid gas—the heat and light is not of or in them, but by means of them.

Now, without touching the hypotheses respecting matter and force—which would not be to our purpose—it is enough, in the present connection, to point out their invariable association in the great world around us, as also in the lesser world within. So that, however inert matter may appear, we are to understand that there is always force imprisoned in its grasp, and on the other hand, however fugitive force may seem, we see, if it is to enter within the range of our cognition, it must be lodged in matter, it must be clothed with a material vestiture; apart from its palpable effects or results in terms of matter, it were impossible to bring home to our minds any conception whatever of the nature of force.

And hence it is that matter becomes the measure of force. But it is not its sole measure. For before matter can become the vehicle of force it must, of course, have the opportunity of shifting and changing its place. Moreover, it is plain that if things require space to move in, they also take time in moving—this is, in fact, the *not yet* of unsatisfied affinity.

Our estimate of force, in any particular case, consists then in the size or mass of the body in question, together with the opportunity given by space and time, and this is measured by the rate at which the object moves. When the ripe fruit drops from the bough, the force of gravitation, which is acting here, is measured by the mass or bulk of the falling fruit, together with the velocity with which it falls,—or, in a word, by its momentum. And if we write  $f$ , for force, and  $mv$  for mass-velocity or momentum, then  $f = mv$ ; that is to say, the force and the momentum are exactly equivalent to each other, the one is the exact measure of the other. But this simple dynamical formula is only a neat way of

expressing the truth that force is, and never can be, known to us save by its visible and tangible effects. What we see and feel is the moving body, never the power which moves it.

From the above remarks it may be gathered that anything that is—in a word, matter—is the representative of force, either actual or potential ; force, that is to say, either in action now, or possible at some future time. Everything thus waits upon the course of time ; to this rule there is no exception ; time is the great referee in the economy of nature.

And thus to imagination's eye does nature unfold her vast and amazing transformation-scene—a series of pictures or *tableaux* in which force, which seemed a moment ago to have come to an end, is detected re-emerging, phoenix-like, somewhere else, but in another shape. It is no fanciful trope, but strictly within the bounds of scientific veracity, to say that coal is but another name for *buried sunlight* ; for it gives back, in burning, the light and heat of the sun-power which was at work in the formation of woody tissue : and if coal be used to heat the engine which drives a dynamo-electric machine, we have, in effect, plucked our electric lighting from the sun. Or this chain of natural magic may be extended by substituting the motive power of a waterfall or river in place of steam. The sun's heat which lifts rain-clouds from the ocean, will be the first term in this series, then by the descent of the rain is this power of the heavens converted into the mechanical equivalent which gives its impulse to the rushing torrent, and so the transformation goes on till the last phase—electricity, is reached.

There are indeed innumerable ways in which this correlation or transmutation of forces might be illus-

trated. We might allude, for instance, to the storage of power in our nervous system, by means of which we move and act. Now this is nothing else than a transference of the power of sun and air, and its application to certain ends under the direction of our will. Again, in winding up a watch, we do in fact throw into the watch a certain portion of our muscular energy ; it is really this which—through the intervention of an ingenious arrangement of springs and wheels—causes the hands to rotate. But suppose we press against some stationary object which resists movement, is not there a dead loss, a pure waste of energy ? Not so, this too has its consequences, for muscular exertion always influences the heart's action—this is accelerated, and there is accordingly a rise in temperature. Nothing is moved, no work is done, it is true, but energy is dissipated in heat—precisely in the same way as in the case of a wheel which does not run smoothly but works with friction. Every one is familiar with the fact that heat very quickly shows itself in the axle of a badly oiled railway-wheel, and the worse it works the hotter it gets ; now this is just as if so much heat were extracted from the furnace and transferred to this ill-working wheel, for by just so much does the locomotive lose something of its driving power. Modern science has proved force to be a veritable *Proteus*.

II.—LIFE A PASSAGE—A DUALISM—A PURSUIT.

Of the visible creation, the life of man is also a part—for man is formed in nature's mould. As force is known by its effects, so is personality and character known by personal influence and personal acts. As force awaits the unfolding of time's scroll, so too in

human affairs—whether the biography of the individual or the history of the race—we see the same progression or gradual unfolding in a series of endeavours, a chain of events.

Now such a progressive unfolding takes place in a definite order which marks it off into characteristic stages: first comes the seed or germ, then the tenderness of immaturity, then adult vigour, and lastly, decrepitude and decay. And this rise and decline, this waxing and waning, which characterizes every movement, progress or career, finds its great prototype in the diurnal rotation of the earth on its axis. The fact which registers itself in consciousness as the apparent motion of the sun, and divides the hours between sunrise, noon, and sunset, is typical of that which takes place in all sorts and conditions of activity, in all practical concerns whatsoever. Everything that has a title to existence tends to move in a similar orbit of measured variation—provided it be free to run its course and to act itself out. Opinions and practices, systems of policy and trade, schools of philosophy or art, all display this natural tendency to describe the parabola of an initial rise expanding into the meridian of maturity and vigour, which is again succeeded by the final and inevitable decline. The flower which opens to the morning sunshine and as surely droops as the shadows of evening fall, is an emblem of the close of activity on the approach of that night which shall finally overtake all capacities and powers.

There is however another side to the picture, for nature, as we have already observed, ends only to begin again. If the day declines into night, day will again follow the night in invariable succession. If the sun appears to sink to rest, if his splendours fade and die away,

it is but to "foretell a bright rising again." The proximate principles of matter which are caught out of earth and air to be wrought into living habitations are returned again to the atmosphere and the soil to repeat, at some future period, the same cycle of events. The drama of life—the story of the earth—is ever repeating itself, evolution is in reality always revolution. And yet this is not exactly a reiteration, a travelling over the same old route again. If the relic of the past is the germ of the future, this is not to say the son will be the facsimile of his father. Nothing exactly repeats itself, and this because time is, from first to last, master of the ceremonies. The present is always new, the past for ever irrevocable; every morning means a renewal and contains the promise of new possibilities and powers.

But the course of human life presents other features besides those which may be described in terms of the dawn, the meridian, and the close of a single day. Life is, namely, a *series* of alternations or revolutions. The wave which now rises and now falls performs, it is true, an undulation which is a complete cycle in itself, but the life or motion of the mighty deep means countless multitudes of such undulations. The opening and closing of the heart, which constitutes a complete pulsation, is but an infinitesimally small fraction of the great pulse of life of which it forms a part. Human life in its totality is like the mighty ocean—a movement composed of a myriad alternations and fluctuations, innumerable instances of motion and pause, of action and reaction, of attraction and repulsion. If the life of men be as the fabric which is woven at the loom of time, we may reflect that this consummation can be effected only through innumerable instances in which life's shuttle has performed its passage to and fro.

---

But rising from the bewildering mass of details suggested by this train of thought, we may fix our attention on certain broad features of life which imply a reciprocal or mutual relationship, and may therefore be described in terms of a dualism. To mention a few of the more noteworthy ; there is, for instance, the dualism of the actual and the ideal self, by which men are impelled to strive after the realization of an ideal type through effort, education and experience : there is the relation of the individual to his *milieu* or surroundings—psychically, in the integration of subject and object—socially, in the relation of a man to his fellows : and then there is the dualism of the sexes, resulting in the conjunction of marriage, and the separation again, in the offspring, in the form of a unisexual individuum, which is again impelled by a natural impulse to seek satisfaction in the marriage tie—thus continuing on the same series of events.

Now a dualism conveys, of course, the notion of a couple or pair of things—a universe with two fixed points or *loci*, between which there is a mutual relationship or *rapport*. And, to give this train of thought a somewhat different turn, we may further remark that in every universe of thought and feeling, there do, in fact, exist two extreme poles, which operate as points of attraction or repulsion, and between which there is a plying to and fro, as in the passage of the shuttle, or swing of the pendulum. Consciousness, however dim, however lowly in the scale of being, is bound up with a sensation of pleasure or of pain ; and this operates without cessation to set the springs of action going—happy the life which is not subject to too violent an alternation either way ; *in medio tutissimus ibis*.

The conception of a dualism, as here indicated,

explains also the essentially relative character of all knowledge. We can never know anything except it be in relation to something else ; we know that a certain object is coloured red, for example, only on condition we can see other things which are not red ; we can know light in no other way than that it is the opposite of darkness,—happiness, in contrast to sorrow ; and perhaps the most intense happiness a man may experience is a sudden relief from the miseries of suspense. To compare, to discriminate, implying therefore at least a couple or pair of things, is the very foundation of cognition and thought. And since it is only by passing from one thing to another that we can be said to gain a true conception of anything whatever, it is plain that consciousness or knowledge is only to be had through this very fact of transition—even as force is manifested by the displacement or shifting of material objects. Moreover since we know a thing by lighting upon it again and recognizing it as distinguished from others, cognition is, in truth, always recognition. Happiness largely consists, indeed, in the recognition of the known and familiar. The *unfamiliar*, if it transgress the limits of an agreeable surprise—if it fail to compass the somewhat doubtful charms of novelty—is felt to be a real source of annoyance and distress, and the relief experienced in regaining *terra cognita* is a measure of the uneasy feelings thus occasioned. Familiar scenes have an indescribable interest for us, familiar tunes are those which please us best ; and however admirable a piece of music may be, is it not when the ear is more or less familiarized with it, that its beauties are best appreciated ? The apprehension of beauty probably largely consists in the following or tracing out from the heterogeneous mass,

---

the clue to that motive of regularity and harmony which is so grateful to sense, and which affects the mind, doubtless, after the manner of a relief—it is something in the nature of a *quest*, a seeking for satisfaction. But this is a character of all force, and hence also of the human will or *ego*, which, operating in a mundane environment, and in vital relation to other cosmic forces, partakes of the character of these.

Life is one long pursuit, made up of innumerable smaller ones. But a pursuit of what? There is only one answer. To every creature on the face of the earth there is, and can be, nothing comparable to its own happiness and well-being; there is nothing else so *worth its while*. This is a law of nature applicable as well to the highest as the lowest. Altruism is no exception to this rule. If self-sacrifice were not as nectar to his higher and better self man would never be heroic. There is not a creature—whatever its place in the scale of vital endowment, and so long as it is free from compulsion—there is not a living creature that will deviate from this first and foremost law of its being, which is also the decree of universal nature.

The instinct of the swallow which bids it seek a southern clime, the fostering care of the mother-bird, which, day after day, chains it to the nest—while it follows with a wistful eye the excursions of its mate, acts with the impetus of natural law. Or change the circumstances of this native force of feeling—see it in the wild panic which prompts to headlong flight when danger nears—see it in the fierce desire which explodes in deeds of violence and theft when want is at the door, and we may mark its kinship to the downward plunge of the mountain torrent, or the upward struggle of the seedling through the sod.

The progress of life, as a whole, is often likened to the movement of a race, and this may be affirmed also of its component parts. The life-history of many an individual might be described as a race or pursuit, in which all other considerations are sacrificed for the sake of obtaining a certain object which is believed to be indispensable to happiness, and which operates, therefore, as a supreme source of attraction ; such is the pursuit of wealth, of fame, of place and power. Trade, politics, sport, war—all these pursuits are characterized by the same anxious, strenuous endeavour in the interests of some felt need, some object of profit and gain. Expeditions, missions, propaganda, and the like, all witness to the same eager pursuit of some desired end, which for the moment dominates the affections and enlists the motive powers of the will. The spirit of enterprise and a passion for discovery has led, on the one hand, to the cheerful endurance of untold hardships incidental to distant voyage and travel ; on the other hand, to the dedication of the energies to invention and advancement in all spheres of industry and labour. That there is so much to be done, that so much remains to be found out, that the circle of darkness is so wide and ever-increasing—all this acts as a perpetual challenge ; it gives the promise of endless expansion and progress on new lines, while revealing the necessity of continued improvement and reconstruction of the old.

There is, however, an important distinction to be drawn between different kinds of pursuit. Compare, for instance, the art of war with certain harmless pursuits which are modelled after the practice and tactics of war—we mean the various forms of recreation known as sports and pastimes. Now war is undertaken, of course, for a most serious practical end—an end which is

deemed of such supreme moment as to justify means and methods which are in themselves utterly unjustifiable. But in the case of sports and pastimes the pursuit contains the object in itself—men love sport for its own sake, not for what it brings—and the ostensive aim or end is only fictitious and subsidiary to that other. Fox-hunting is kept up not so much for the purpose of catching or exterminating foxes as for the fine “run across country.” Racing competitions are started, cricket and football matches arranged, and trials of strength contested by river and sea, in the gymnasium or on the turf—not so much for the avowed object of reaching the goal and gaining the prize, as for the pleasurable excitement afforded by such means. And pernicious as the unrestrained love of excitement may be, it must be owned that human faculty is displayed rather in pursuits of the latter class than in pursuits where some material advantage is to be gained. In the free play of a faculty which knows how to originate and invent occasions for its exercise sport betrays its truly human character—shows an advance upon those activities of animal life which are expended in relieving the immediate necessities of the hour. To put the case strongly, the champions of the “ring,” who shake hands before they settle to their work, are in principle—and however objectionable this form of sport may be—acting in a manner more consistent with the instincts of humanity than the most famous of the world’s heroes who have won their laurels on the field of battle. When nations go to war, the interests involved are *in kind* quite similar to those which prompt two dogs to fight over a bone—self-preservation impels every living thing to defend its own interests and to assert itself at the expense of another.

III.—THE PURSUIT OF PLEASURE—ITS USE AND ABUSE.

LIFE is a pursuit, we said, and happiness its goal. Is then the pursuit of pleasure the proper business of man ? Let us see.

Man shares with other animals the capacity for sense-gratification. But more than this. The possession of a power of origination lacking in them, coupled with a faculty of contemplation and reminiscence far beyond anything known in the animal kingdom, renders it probable that man can draw deeper draughts of pleasure from his bodily organism than is the case with the brute creation. This being so, let us consider what happens on the occasion of any typical case of animal pleasure—it matters not what, provided it be charged with the glowing witchery of sense. To begin with the moment when pleasure is on tip-toe with expectation ; observe, in the first place, how largely the pleasurable anticipation is dashed by that sense of uneasiness which always attends an appetite whetted but not yet appeased ; so that the frame of feeling at this stage of expectancy is a mingled one, and probably is—if the truth must be told—more painful than pleasant. Pass we now to the stage of fruition, when the object of desire is fairly within grasp. Surely now shall pleasure rejoice and take its fill. But no ; here also there seems to be treachery somewhere ; and to our chagrin we are bound to confess that the present experience seems, after all, to fall short of its anticipation. At the very moment of gratification—at the very moment when sweetness touches our lip, a strange sense of satiety and distaste steals in to rob us of the fabled bliss. Stimulate and

spur our flagging sense as we may, pleasure turns out to be a faithless siren—*disenchantment* is in her kiss. And then, again, when it is all over, when the coveted moment is now a thing of the past, does it not seem most provokingly obscure and dim, and do we not instinctively turn from the past reminiscence which exists only in the fancy, and cling to the possibilities of a future renewal, clothing this in colours which fond imagination contributes, and treacherous memory too easily permits?

Moreover, it will, we think, be owned that if the pleasures of sense are to be largely indulged, it must be done in a brutish sort of way, and, as it were, under protest. The witchery of sense hinges on the possibility of cajoling into silence the voice of reason; the better judgment must be requested, for the nonce, to vacate its seat; and if it do reappear—as is not unlikely, like Banquo's ghost in the middle of the feast—it creates a disturbance which is fatal to success.

Consider now another instance of natural desire which seems equally impotent in procuring true content: we refer to the lust of acquisition, the hankering after possession. How often do men picture to themselves a vista of happiness if only they were in possession of another's position, other belongings and prospects than those which are their own. But let the coveted ideal actually fall to their share, and lo! the fancied charm is gone. With its possession, the capacity to enjoy the object of desire seems to have fled. Instances are not unknown where a man, previously happy and content, has been rendered perfectly miserable—ruined in fact—by suddenly coming in for a large fortune. To remove all pressure of necessity is not by any means an unmixed good. To give a man *plein pouvoir* is often to take

away all his zest. If he can do just exactly what he likes, the chances are he won't care to do anything at all, and remains an idle fellow.

Something of this failure to please on the part of the good things of life is no doubt often attributable to the fact that habituation is a veritable narcotic, which blunts the sensibility, and dulls perception ; but the chief source of disappointment is generally due to a fatal error of judgment which substitutes the means for the end. The hoarding of the miser is the typical case in point. Since affluence is the means of procuring enjoyment of all descriptions, the mistake is made of converting that into an end which is, properly speaking, only a means. And this is also the reason why pleasure invariably fails to satisfy when sought for its own sake. It is forgotten that pleasure is the concomitant of something else ; that nature never intended it to function in its own name, but designed it as an accompaniment to the exercise of certain capacities and powers, and failing this it is not to be had. The fact is, pleasure is no more to be caught by itself than a man can put himself to sleep by thinking about it. Sleep does not come by planning and scheming, but let the natural conditions be complied with—let there be the fatigue of wholesome toil—and it comes of itself, steals over us imperceptibly and “without observation” ; while we are thinking of something else sleep surprises us, as an “angel unawares.” Is not this also the secret of pleasure ?

The choicest delicacies of the table fail to satisfy if the appetite be not stimulated by healthy exercise, but use your limbs, and the most homely fare will yield more delight than a rich repast with no zest to enjoy it. He who reclines at ease in his carriage is a stranger to the delicious glow which is the reward of taking the

trouble to mount one's horse and join in the arduous efforts of the chase. And, in like manner, whoso takes his opinions second-hand—has his thinking done for him, so to speak, by somebody else—misses altogether the indescribable satisfaction which the practice of earnest and honest enquiry engenders. Something to be overcome is the price to be paid for happiness—there is no sport or pastime without its spice of danger and its *soupçon* of pain—to be unmindful of this truth is to fight against the providence of nature. For happiness sought in any other way is not an asset to life's count; it is, on the contrary, a defect and loss, and quickly leads to disappointment and decay. Idle pleasures are the portion of the bored and the *blasé*. Forsooth they are not to be named in any sense which fits in with the intentions of nature. Contrast, for instance, the old *habitué* of the stalls who takes the most languid interest in what is going on, with the young enthusiast in the gallery, following every movement with rapt attention and a kindling eye, and say if it be not so.

Observant of this inevitable link between happiness and toil, we may derive some comfort in the belief that disparate as is men's lot in life this need not imply a corresponding difference in the stock of enjoyment available for each. The rich and prosperous have no special lease of gladness, the favourites of fortune are not always light-hearted and free from care, nor do park-gates always close upon contentment and peace of mind.

And so from considering the pursuit of pleasure we have naturally passed to its meaning and its use; and if we look a little below the surface of things we may understand how that the fun and excitement of games

and pastimes is in order that the healthy frame may be raised to a higher pitch of vitality ;—so, in like manner, the excitement of discussion and debate (when it often seems as if nothing was gained or settled, as if it was all time and labour lost) has the same wholesome tonic effect in bracing the mental physique. The pleasures of eating are in order that we may eat ; the exultation which attends success, hitting the mark, and going right, is just in order that we *may* succeed, hit the mark, and go right. On the other hand, things that are hurtful are connected with penalties and pains. A lowering of vital power in injury and sickness is accompanied by a corresponding lowering of animal spirits, if not with actual pain ; and however *nice* it may be to be *naughty* for a time, the consequences of wrong-doing are always far from agreeable. What is the inference ? Plainly, that we may be induced to observe the laws of health and be wise in time ; it is nature's way of hoisting the danger-signal.

IV.—LIMITS OF CAPACITY—ADJUSTMENT AND COMPENSATION.

To revive the more philosophic turn of a former paragraph, let us go on now to observe, further, that in every universe of feeling there are two extreme points which define the range of consciousness in that particular case ; there are, that is to say, two extremes of pleasure and pain, and beyond these limits extends on either side the illimitable blank of unconsciousness. For instance, a gentle touch is grateful and soothing to sense, but a blow is, of course, painful ; and if the vehemence of forcible impact be very severe the result is a complete deadness to feeling—the part is paralyzed.

The mechanism of the muscular system, let us next observe, is intended for movement; in a state of quiescence we derive no consciousness of pleasure from our muscles, but after a period of rest the fresh organ will respond to the stimulus which puts it on the stretch with a thrill of delight—this pleasant feeling of muscular tension is the foundation of all athletic sports, in short. Should this pass beyond a certain point, however, a sense of fatigue supervenes, and now repose is a luxury and a relief; but prolong the exercise beyond this stage of natural fatigue, irritation and ultimately inflammation will ensue, this is followed by paralysis, and this again—supposing the injurious effects to continue—issues finally in necrosis or death. In like manner the sensations located in the eye and ear may be described as a passage from darkness and silence through pleasant sights and sounds to a dazzling or blinding glare on the one hand, and the distress of excessive noise on the other; and if this be prolonged paralysis is the result; that is to say, these sensations relapse again into the blankness of silence and the dark. The mind is an organ of active use—when unexercised it languishes and decays; idleness kills as surely as overwork. But a certain amount of tension in mental occupation (or *attention*) is accompanied by the pleasurable sensation which is always the sign of healthy exercise. When the limit is reached, however, the capacity of the mind naturally shrinks, its activity gradually slackens and at last sinks to rest in sleep, till the balance of nutrition be restored. But let the mental strain be too protracted and signs of irritation will appear, which banishes the very possibility of sleep; and if this be long continued there is but one termination,—unconsciousness and death. People have been “done to death” simply by

means having been taken to prevent them going to sleep.

The laws which govern the human organism do in an unmistakable way, and with an insistence which brooks no evasion, vindicate their character and purpose whenever they are set at naught. The lassitude and listless indifference of the individual whose life lacks proper interest and diversion is comparable to an organ which is stinted and starved of its proper nutriment. A craving for variety is the natural impulse of a need which cries aloud for satisfaction. But, as before said, the gamut of feeling is rounded off at either end by the blank of unconsciousness, and thus a similar state of listless apathy—a state in which every pleasure palls—is seen also in cases where the system has been exposed to repeated or excessive shocks and thrills of emotion.

It is, however, the stage previous to this extinction of healthy interest—this “ultima Thule” of the *blase*, that presents the saddest spectacle of all. In the absence of a judicious control of the hot speed of desire appetites are allowed to become too absorbing, and, consequently, pass into the torrid zone of passions and vices. The will then runs down the inclined plane of unsatisfied desire with the ever increasing velocity which characterizes every kind of force as it approaches its source of attraction—(a truth which justifies the wisdom of interposing *distance* between the temptation and its victim)—till at length the last stage is reached; desire has been too rudely quenched, its wholesome play is at an end; the powers are jaded, they are *used up*, and nothing now remains but a feeling of satiety and disgust.

Now these pictures of human experience do but illustrate that universal principle of compensation—that alternation between energy expended and energy stored up,

which is the very life of the cosmos, and by which in the lesser world of man, the integrity of health is established and maintained. We have spoken of *idle* pleasure. It is an example occurring in the human economy of what physicists call the “dissipation of energy”; and it is fitly called *dissipation*. It is, that is to say, the spending, or using up, of vital force with no adequate return. *Something* is gained, no doubt: we do not deny that; but it is a gain on the side of dissolution and decay—not on the side of development and growth. We referred, on a previous page, to the familiar fact that a wheel which works with friction very quickly gets hot, and that the heat thus engendered is, in reality, so much loss to the driving power concerned. Is not this something like the glow of illicit passion? The dissolute man is none the stronger, none the better, for his dissipation; it is but as the useless heat generated in the wheel which does not work as it ought.

A balance and control, a principle of adjustment and compromise pervades the whole machinery of life. Observe, for instance, how that the irrepressible restlessness of young children is in connection with the sound and prolonged slumber of early years; or again, that those early years of life, in which the foundations of knowledge are to be laid, are characterized by a curiosity and romantic interest which would be considered unbecoming in grown-up people. Note also that, while the consolidation of custom is essential to a settled and agreeable state of existence—gives the basis of attachment, the *point d'appui*, for all solid achievement on the part of man—yet is novelty and change most essential to sanity and health. But where moderation is not observed, where action is inordinate and measures extreme, mischief is sure to be brewing. If through

unwise counsels the pendulum of nature has been displaced too far, nothing will prevent a counter sweep in the opposite direction. If man do not intervene to counteract the consequences of his folly, things do, in fact, tend, as the expression is, to "right themselves." The tendency of fashion, in any and every sphere of human activity, to pass over from one extreme to another, is notorious. Equally noticeable is the issue of social tyranny in anarchy and rebellion. What a standing menace to the happiness and security of the state is the monstrous inequality of wealth which characterizes our modern centres of industry : the cry of the outcast embitters the successes of capital and commerce ; wealth is harassed by insecurity, and trembles because the masses are sunk in wretchedness and hopeless toil. And will it be denied—to refer to the biggest monstrosity of all—that the laws of nature would only be acting themselves out if the people of the West End (well meaning and philanthropic though they may personally be) are, in some wild hour of exceptional need, threatened and overwhelmed by the pauper multitudes of the East ?

V.—MAN'S ESTIMATE OF NATURE.

By considerations such as these we have sought to indicate the method or plan which may be recognised in the order of nature. We alluded to the operation or play of cosmic forces as a *seeking for satisfaction*, and we submitted the soundness of the view which ascribes the varied form and feature of the world we see around us to this very circumstance—to the circumstance, namely, that forces are *not yet satisfied*.

But what, it may now be asked, is the exact meaning of the terms just used? Does not satisfaction imply the appeasing of an appetite, the fulfilling of a want? How are such notions applicable to the forces of inanimate nature?

Let us once more repeat that nature is not her own interpreter, but finds a tongue in man. And if man meditates on nature he can do so no otherwise than in terms of his own experience, he has no other instrument or organ of apprehension save the capacity of his own intelligence and sense. Man is not only the "crown and head," he is also the *measure* of things. The sun's daily course in the heavens he has estimated by comparing it to the "progress made by a good walker during the same time"; his ten fingers suggested the decimal notation, he counted by digits and measured by paces and spans. That man should place his little foot-rule against the immensities of infinity seems ludicrous enough; but there is no other way. And who can tell what secrets may still be hid in nature's lap. The Romans were a great people, yet their *orbis terrarum* was an insignificant part of the whole globe.

The same incongruity appears when we speak of the affections and affinities of matter, the *attractions* of chemistry and gravitation. Such terms convey ideas of feeling and consciousness, because we ourselves feel and are conscious. It seems impossible to discuss matter and force without, in some sort, romancing. Sometimes we romance intentionally and of set purpose—primitive man did so out of sheer ignorance—but without the least intention of being poetical, and in the full blaze of modern scientific culture, we do, truth to say, all thus think and speak of nature; and this follows as a matter of logical necessity and fact; it is because from first to last we are the sole measure of

things. We cannot help personifying, for we ourselves are persons. There is, of course, error involved in all this ; we shall endeavour, in the sequel, to show how greatly this personification of natural law is a misrepresentation of the truth ; here we are concerned in showing in what respects we are justified in applying a character usually linked with consciousness and feeling to the insensate laws of matter.

To think on nature is to philosophize, to unify, to discover the one in the many ; and when we talk of cosmic forces we do in fact regard nature as an organism complete in itself. When it is said, therefore, that such-and-such a force is seeking satisfaction, the advantage or gain implied is to be understood in this enlarged sense—in reference, that is to say, to nature as a whole. If an apple drops to the ground, or a coral reef forms at sea, we do not, it is true, see anything gained in the particular occurrence in question, but these are solitary examples of the action of forces which are instrumental in building up the visible fabric of creation and thereby furnishing a home for capacities and powers of the highest order—and this is certainly something in the nature of utility and gain.

So far as there is fiction involved in the use of the language referred to, it is perfectly warrantable, for no one is misled by it—no one imagines the apple *wants* to fall in the same sense as the dog strains at the leash or the lover hies to his lady's bower—yet it serves to express a truth, and that, too, in the only way available for human intelligence. But this fictitious element diminishes as the summit of creation's scale is reached. We even say a plant *wants* water, air, &c. ; but it is in the animal kingdom that the operation of wants and wishes comes fully into view.

**VI.—THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL LAW COMPARED—MAN'S BIAS  
TO GO ASTRAY—THE TWO SELVES—DUTY—INTEREST—MERIT.**

Now it requires no unusual power of penetration to see that a principle of utility runs throughout the scheme of nature ;—such may be affirmed as a general truth. Under the circumstances, this seems, indeed, wholly necessary. For if it were not so—supposing, for instance, instinct and desire had been associated with things which were obnoxious to animal life, instead of contributing to its maintenance and health, it is plain, living creatures would quickly have come to an end, if indeed they would ever have had a beginning. Hence that law of life which leads animals to shun things which are dangerous and deadly, and to seek those things which make for their good. But nothing would seem more contrary to fact than to make such an assertion in regard to the human species : for there is nothing commoner than to see men bent on the possession or enjoyment of things which are certain to do them harm, and, contrariwise, manifesting a positive indifference for things which are as certainly for their good. To prefer what is wrong, to act by choice in defiance of conviction, is indeed so much the rule, that he who acts differently is considered specially deserving of praise. Prisons, penitentiaries, and bodies of police constitute a painful attestation of man's fatal bias to go astray. But these are social institutions, and indicate therefore but a small part of this moral obliquity in man—only that part namely which is in connection with his fellows. Were the whole truth known, these and the like evidences of

guilt would dwindle into insignificance beside the testimony of the secret monitor in every individual breast.

The fact is, the ethical ground we touch here ushers us into a region quite peculiar to the race. It is this moral factor, namely, which lends human character its dual, its *amphibious* aspect, so to speak, causing it to belong to two worlds at once—to the world of spirit, and to the world of nature. For if the interests of the life spiritual would detach man from the attractions of earth, he is, at the same time, bound to these by all the propensities and sympathies of his animal nature: if his treasure is in heaven, *he* is not there, but is as much a denizen of earth as every other earth-born creature.

To state the antithesis between what is commonly called spiritual or moral, and natural law is not however to affirm that these laws are different in their mode of action; rather does the difference lie in their spheres of operation. Laws of health do not stop at the confines of the material and physical world, they hold good also in the world of moral endeavour; there is a hygiene of the soul as well as a hygiene of the body. Happiness is linked with sound and healthy action, and pain with that which is depraved and bad, in the one case as in the other. Life's philosophy is distinctly utilitarian, and the selfsame law holds good for all sentient creatures alike, whether man or beast. Every creature is by nature impelled to do the best for itself, to make the most of its life—there is no animal that lives that will wittingly invite pain to its bosom. To this man is no exception, for "the craft which made the world" runs into his character also.

Now it will hardly be affirmed that anyone desiderates evil for its own sake, but rather for the sake of certain advantages which are supposed to be attaching to it. If

anyone perverts the truth, it is because he deems a perversion of the truth is to his advantage. There is no object in prevarication besides this. True, some people (especially young persons) seem to take a peculiar pleasure in fibbing—as imparting, presumably, a fictitious colouring and romance to the prosaic dulness of life; but this is not the true function of the lie, and, with this exception, it may be affirmed that people naturally avoid telling lies if they can help it. To speak generally, it is not in the nature of the case that a rational being should deliberately avow delight in wrong-doing. An attempt is always made to justify the wrong course of action on some ground or other—it is expedient, it is absolutely necessary, it is so pleasant—by some means or other, by hook or crook, an effort is made to explain away the harm of it. Or if anyone do make a parade of seeking evil for its own sake, we are fairly warranted in not listening to him. For it is the very essence of evil to change its aspect, and to present itself, in its appeal to the heart, as good and not as evil—this is its passport, its ticket of admission, its only way of gaining access.

Now there seems but one conclusion to which all this points, and it is this:—that while in the realm of instinct animality has learnt to work with tolerable precision, humanity is, on the other hand, the veriest tyro in the school of virtue. The general inadequacy of the felt needs of the higher self to supply motives for conduct gives melancholy proof that the spiritual law is but imperfectly understood, seen dimly, and “in part.”

It is on this account surely, and on no other, that we attach such importance to *merit* as the test of conduct. To an action which it is either very agreeable to do, or which a person cannot help doing, we are not disposed

to ascribe any merit whatever. There is no merit in abstaining from deeds of violence where there is no temptation or wish to do such things ; but to restrain, in obedience to a higher mandate, the natural impulse to give way to provocation is to win the approbation of every right-thinking person. On the other hand, if some one seriously declares he has felt it his duty to do something which is, at the same time, extremely pleasant, he will probably be listened to with an incredulous smile —such is the painful antithesis between the *like* and the *ought* of human conduct.

Divergent as the paths of duty and pleasure generally are this is not to say, however, that they must always remain so—on the bare possibility that it is, and shall be, otherwise, the hopes of humanity do indeed most emphatically hang. Yet if these two paths do coincide, observe what happens: this namely, that there is no more room for merit ; it is no longer applicable—for it would be silly to praise people for doing what they like. Clearly then merit is in relation to the felt opposition to be overcome ; it is indeed the measure of this. What else can the premium we put upon good and conscientious conduct mean, but that the claims of duty are so hazy, so dimly discerned, as to require quite a peculiar leverage or lifting power before they will be acted up to ? This remarkable backwardness to act in accordance with his best interests, what can it mean but a failure on the part of the individual to see that such-and-such a course of action *is* to his interest—else he would so act. Did men really believe that sin hurts like some sharp instrument or poison or fire, they would act differently.

If, as has sometimes happened, a wild beast escapes from a menagerie and makes its appearance in the open street—see how the people will fly, helter-skelter. No

persuasion is needed to make them take to their heels. Do people thus run away from temptation ? Does it not take a mighty deal of persuasion before you will get some one to give up some cherished plan which he all the time knows very well to be wrong ? We all acknowledge the claims of physical law, the necessity of bowing to it, and obeying it, but moral obligation is treated as a matter of choice. When a boy at school tells a lie to escape a caning he is clearly of the opinion it is better his conscience should suffer wrong than that his body or his pride should suffer pain. "I am sure," says Thoreau, "there is greater anxiety, commonly, to have fashionable, or at least unpatched, clothes, than to have a sound conscience." That the moral law can be broken with comparative indifference and a tolerably light heart is a proof that the spiritual eye is only partially awake, that the spiritual sense is clogged with the *materies morbi* of earth. What is it that gives the office of religion its urgent character but this defect in the moral and spiritual nature of man ? And do not the shortcomings of conduct recall in a very impressive manner that element of incompleteness referred to in the opening passages of this essay ?

But it was there pointed out that this negative or minus element plays no mean part in the purposes of nature ; that it gives the very condition—furnishes opportunity and room in fact—for force to employ itself. And applying this principle in the present connection, we may ask what indeed would be the meaning of Christian virtues if it were not for the un-Christlike and carnal nature in man ? Under any other circumstances patience, meekness and forgiveness would lose all their distinctive meaning : to eliminate the grosser element would be to take away the possibility of the spiritual

life to employ itself. Something to be overcome, we said in speaking of animal pleasures, is the price to be paid for all happiness. It is the same with the life which is spiritual ; the promise is "to him that overcometh."

If, however, we are attentive to nature's plan we may observe that such a state of matters—a conflict of warring elements—is by no means confined to human existence ; only in the case of man it is carried on at a higher level and with a more momentous issue. If there is a baser or animal nature in man—if, that is to say, human life contains that within which is not truly human, so also, as we have already shown, does the plant contain a grosser element which is not vegetal. And when we speak of things spiritual transcending the things of sense, it must not be forgotten that every kingdom of nature may be described as transcendental to the one below it. The flower which culls molecules of carbon from the air, and, dipping down into the soil, "turns mud into bright colour, and dead earth into food for bees," may be fitly described as something which transcends the chemical and physical forces of the mineral world ; for it asserts authority over them, overcomes them, and subdues them to its own uses—till the time comes when its frail fabric must suffer the fate which overtakes all things of earth, must decay and perish, and then those lower inorganic forces assume their sway. So too in other spheres of nature, consciousness transcends the sphere of the plant, conscience the sphere of the animal.

For do we not see precisely the same kind of thing taking place in the life spiritual, or—in contrast to the life of brutes—the essentially human life ? Here too we see one kind of force controlling another, using it, subduing it, as the plant the mineral, for its own ends.

It is the same method—a similar conflict of warring elements—but taking place at a higher section of creation's cone, and with a more momentous issue. He who restrains the impulse of the moment, and elects to follow the leading of a higher motive, acts—not as the brute beasts which have no understanding, but as a truth-loving, conscience-guided human being. Man uses his bodily organs, his instincts and his feelings—he has indeed nothing else to use, it is his stock-in-trade—but he uses them, not *as* an animal, for he is something more; he uses them (or he may do so if he will) for other ends. It is the same machinery, but set to work out a different result; the same instrument put to a different tune.

It is not, let us continue, that laws are abrogated or suspended, but they are made subservient to higher purposes. If the lark soars aloft with untired wing, it is not that gravity acts any less forcibly upon it than is the case with the shooting meteor (which falls with such prodigious velocity as to set its course on fire), but, in the case of the bird, gravity is re-directed by a superior power; and, truth to say, if it were not for that heaviness of its bodily frame which seems to oppose its every movement, the swift flight of the bird would be impossible—it could only float idly in the air. So too, when man holds fast to the line of duty, turning a deaf ear to the solicitations of some inferior motive, it is not that the latter does not act, but it is overruled; it is not that desire is abolished, but it is given a new direction.

And observe further the alternative involved in this principle of utilization. For there is here no mere comparison of things which meet on equal terms and can go on existing together side by side, like the different waters of the Rhone. It is on the contrary a contest,

fraught with the issues of life and death. The one kind of force must be sacrificed, given up to the other. For the one means, in fact, the negation, the loss, the death of that other. Whenever the life of animal or plant becomes enfeebled and languid, then do the forces of the inorganic world tend to start into activity ; and if the enfeeblement reaches a certain point the organism succumbs to the operation of those inferior powers of destruction—it dies, in short. So with the higher life in man, where no effort is made to stem the torrent of natural desire and give it a new direction, men are said to be “dead” in trespasses and sins : the animal physique may be in first-rate condition, but there is little else besides.

Now the forces which, at death, take possession of the bodily frame and side it away as so much useless lumber, are, of course, inferior to those which build it up in life ;—the contrast is between processes of life and growth and processes of dissolution and decay. So, too, in respect to the activities belonging to the self of animal existence, in so far as these come into collision with the claims of duty—so soon as they clash with the aims of the life spiritual, must they be regarded in the light of a dissipation and dissolution, a degeneration and decay. And if the spiritual eye were as quick to observe, as the physical organ of vision, this all too frequent triumph of the baser self, would, without doubt, present an equally ugly spectacle. It is true, appearances may be deceptive. There are, for instance, certain states of disease—certain dropsical and inflammatory states, to wit—in which the body acquires increased proportions and exhibits an augmentation of function, but this is not to affirm that a morbid condition is to be ranked higher than a condition of health. No one will deny that the

ill-gotten gains of the gambler, or the hoards of the miser, are, in reality, a source of degradation and loss : any and every case of exaggerated indulgence is, in truth, a weakness and a failing, and not an addition to the strength of the normal standard of life.

Whatever the sphere of action—whether physical, mental, or moral—life seems to be modelled on the same utilitarian plan. It were, indeed, to a man's interest to do his duty if he only knew it. And the reason why duty and interest are so frequently opposed is because of our want of knowledge, or, rather, our want of faith in respect to moral obligation. Is this to rob duty of its *disinterested* character ? No ; not if we are mindful of the fact that there are two selves in man—an ideal self of high resolve and pure and noble endeavour ; an actual *selfish* self, a creeping thing of earth, which makes us ashamed before God and before our fellow. The negative or minus quantity in the life of man is far too big that duty should ever be anything else than disinterested, or that self-denial should ever run the risk of being mistaken for self-indulgence.

It is, however, manifest that as soon as we touch the spiritual or inner life of man we are handling a subject of no small delicacy. Here are the hidden springs of action, here is a region removed from the public gaze,—open only to the ken of the individual himself. We may note the growth of the physical frame, we may mark the intellectual advance, but how shall we gauge the mystery of motive, or detect the secret movements of the soul ? And indeed those who make most progress in this kind of growth are perhaps, of all persons, the most deeply conscious of that element of blight and blemish which so largely disfigures the ideal life of man : while to others it is the very incomplete, not to say

embryonic, state of development which characterizes spiritual force in the present sphere of existence, that makes it so hard to realize, permits it so readily to escape detection.

But this again is no exception to the rule, for if we contemplate the cosmic order we find that in proportion to status or rank in the scale of creation, there is a corresponding limitation in distribution. In trade the more choice and costly the article turned out, the fewer will there be of its kind; quality varies inversely with quantity. But this is an old principle in nature, as a moment's reflection will serve to show. The great bulk of the terrestrial globe consists of completely inert and sterile mineral matter; the vegetable life which just skirts the edge of this adamantine mass is more widely distributed than the forms of animal life; animals, again, are more plentiful than men, and, to come now to the summit of the scale, we may notice lastly that the animal interests *in man* occupy a larger share of the human economy, pose more conspicuously, strike the eye more forcibly, than the impalpable, viewless, intermittent and wavering force of that moral and spiritual life which is most truly human and, presumably, the crown of all.

For who will deny that the natural law, the law of physical necessity, commands more general assent than the law of moral obligation? Who will deny that the actual self, or man as he is, is far more petted, cultivated, and looked after than the ideal self, or man as he ought to be? However diligent, prompt, and successful men may be in business, in professional work, in the thousand-and-one ways there are for engaging the activity of body, mind, and spirit, the conviction still remains that we are "miserable sinners," that we have

done innumerable things we ought not to have done, and have not done the things we ought. By common consent this is felt to be a confession in which we may all join, yet, at the same time, one which is very appropriate to each. There can be no question that the negative element which exists in every kingdom of nature, is most conspicuous in that kingdom which is highest of all. It seems odd it should be so, but we cannot say it is contrary to nature's plan.

But there remains something yet to be said. For to fix upon the animal creature in man as the alien element which gives spiritual faculty its *posse*, or opportunity of action, may seem to be attaching a stigma not altogether deserved. The postulate might, if unqualified, be taken to support a view of life which is as injudicious in theory as it has been unfortunate in practice. If some animal pleasures are clearly selfish and sinful, others, again, may claim the sanction of the most enlightened conscience. If a man indulge in bracing sports and genial pastimes, so much the better, so long as this is consistent with the performance of higher duties. A flow of animal spirits is not necessarily wrong ; fun and frolic may be perfectly innocent—is, in fact, the portion of the innocent, *i.e.* of little children. It cannot for an instant be supposed that the animal nature is burdened with a sense of guilt. We shudder at the thought of some ferocious beast of prey rending its quivering victim limb from limb, yet there is no blame attaching to the action, there is no guilt involved, no remorse felt for what is done. So is it also with the animal nature, the creature, or natural self in man. It is as innocent of the knowledge of good and evil as the brute beast—(very young children, who are, to all intents and purposes, little animals, are perfect little monsters

of cruelty)—but evil arises in its being permitted to act itself out unchecked, unrestrained by the higher self. Consider, for instance, what happens in the germination of the seed. At first when dropped into the ground the seed decays, and if this goes on unchecked it would die, but, resisted by the spark of vitality inherited from the parent-plant, this process of destruction is changed into the minister of life and growth. As with the mineral element in plant life, already referred to, so here, there is the same compensatory action taking place, though at an earlier stage. The principle of death and destruction *controlled* becomes the very gate of life.

It is on this wise the higher and the lower self in man is correlated—this is the dualism of his divided nature. As the mineral to the plant, so is the baser animal nature in man necessary to the development of his spiritual needs. In either case we see the union of elements which, if they were allowed to act themselves out, would be mutually destructive. The baser element is both essential and hostile to the higher, friend and foe in one. Outlaw and rebel if uncontrolled, here, if anywhere, is to be found the sole available material for the manufacture of saintly lives. A perilous plan, surely, and one which gives to human life its character of perpetual crux. For within due bounds the appetites of that inferior nature (which we have been calling such hard names) are also to be considered ; it all depends on *how* they are enjoyed and used ; it all turns on a question of motive ; this is the *elixir vita*, which shall transform the things of the lower self and make them meet for the life which is spiritual. Instances are not wanting which show that a cultivation of bodily arts and graces may be compatible with the pursuit of the

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loftiest ideals of purity and virtue. Such were to be found in the age of chivalry, and to such we owe the half-mystical, but deeply realistic, legends of the *San Grael*, the Arthurian Romances, and the *Faery Queene* of Spenser. Or coming nearer to our own times we may acknowledge that the precepts of a Kingsley or a Ruskin have shown that Christianity is none the worse for being *muscular*.

And thus, to look for a moment on the other side of the picture, we may observe that the danger of exaggeration is not confined to the enjoyment of animal tastes and pleasures—it is also applicable to the indulgence of every kind of desire, the exercise of every faculty, however good and worthy in itself. Pleasure may be made an end in itself in the spiritual as well as in any other sphere of activity, and may not unfrequently be seen assuming the overgrown proportions of what might be termed *religious dissipation*, and developing into various forms of morbid sentiment. The asceticism of an earlier age, or the “perfectionism” of this, might be quoted as examples. Cases of spiritual excess, such as these, are an indication that life has been conducted on an ill-concerted plan, that nature’s method of balance and compromise has been disregarded, and spiritual capacity therefore permitted to trench upon the rightful province of earthly interests. History teems with instances of ill-advised extravagance, even in those matters which belong to man’s eternal peace. Unnatural and solitary seclusion in convent and desert was the evidence of an exalted devotion to the interests of the higher self, but the evils engendered were evidence also that where the proper use of the judgment is neglected there is no guarantee that spiritual energy shall not run riot like any other.

VII.—THE NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL LAW CONTRASTED—MAN THE INDIVIDUAL AND MANKIND THE RACE.

HAPPINESS, a feeling of satisfaction at hitting the mark and going right, is the guide and inward test of action for every sentient being. About this there can be no question. But it is plain, from what we have said of man's divided nature, that there are different kinds of happiness—the animal propensities are happy after their kind, the moral sentiments after theirs ; about this also there can be no manner of doubt ; the only question is, which is the best kind ?

Now, that men are continually in doubt about this matter, their actions plainly declare. Animals suffer no such perplexity ; they act, we say, from instinct. But instinct is only another name for a kind of knowledge which has been carried to the highest pitch. Knowledge is power ; and when you know perfectly how to do a thing, you do not think about it, you do it mechanically ; given the occasion, the action follows instanter, and, as it were, of necessity. Such is the action of natural law in animal life.

Perhaps the time may come when humanity shall instinctively go right, as we now instinctively shrink from physical pain ;—but the time is not yet. And if it ever come about, it could only be through a change in that dual and divided nature which is the source of man's reluctance, in the time which now, is to acknowledge that his interest really hinges on good conduct and is identical with it. From some physical ill, from murder, or poison, or fire, a man will defend himself with all the power that in him lies—(it is indeed aston-

ishing what an amount of force is displayed, even in the weakest, when the natural law summons the powers in self-defence)—but there is no corresponding vigour of resistance in combating some spiritual ill ; and should this be spiced with the pleasures of sense, the dose of spiritual poison shall be swallowed with cheerfulness, not to say avidity. Now the inference we have drawn from this unlovely trait in human character is this—that man does not realize, does not really know, the deadliness of sin. But, as a little reflection will easily show, there remains yet a very weighty word to be said, for if this were the whole account of the matter we should indeed have cause to complain—we might well call in question a fate which would have made man answerable for something he does not know, and punishable for what he cannot help,—then, indeed, an insupportable, intolerable blight had blackened and confounded the issues of life. But such is not the fact of the case. Man has not been left in the dark. If he do not divine—as it is plain he does not—the identity of duty and interest, it cannot be said he does not understand the broad and undeniable difference betwixt right and wrong.

There is one thing which a faithful survey of the mental economy of man brings prominently into view. It is very manifest, namely, that the scheme of life (we are referring to the life of the individual) is modelled on a plan which gives to the claims of duty precedence and priority of importance over the claims of knowledge. If it were not so, *if the pursuit of knowledge and not the pursuit of virtue had been the one thing needful*, we do not say it would have been free from difficulty—something to be overcome is, as we have seen, a condition of every kind of exercise whatsoever—but we are bold to assert it had not been left to be discovered by chance,

and in many cases, in the humbler walks of life, for instance, the very chance of discovery withheld.

It is true, the course of human life not unfrequently assumes a painful, and sometimes even a tragical character. Many a lot seems to display the cruel irony and caprice of some mocking spirit, instead of the just methods of beneficent wisdom. But man is, to a large extent, responsible for this. He is too often his own enemy. The misery he deplores comes, in great measure, from his own folly in wilfully disregarding the plain indications of natural law in the world around him—the equally plain promptings of conscience in the inner cosmos of his own being. Everybody knows full well that obstacles to right conduct lie far more in the perversity of his own will than in anything else.

Now if there is a truth which must have impressed any who have made a study of the works and ways of nature, it is surely this—that there is evidence of intention, and of certain means and methods by which that intention shall be accomplished. All who engage in scientific research, be their opinion, sect or creed what it may, are familiar with this fact. If men of science do not take such evidence of design as indicating the workings of a conscious will, they will be the first to acknowledge that there is a *providence* in nature. Who has more beautifully illustrated this truth than the man whose name still seems to be a kind of bugbear in the religious world—we refer to the great apostle of evolution, Mr. Darwin. In his work on the *Fertilization of Plants by Birds*, Darwin has drawn attention to the fact that flowers, with their lovely colours and sweet smell, are, in all probability, and properly speaking, but the means to a useful end. All this display of attractive beauty, is in order to entice certain little winged creatures—birds and

insects—which, brushing against the pollen, and thus carrying it on their visits to other flowers, are instrumental in effecting what is called the *cross-fertilization* of plants. By this interesting contrivance there is, in fact, a twofold object gained—these little creatures obtain their nourishment, while at the same time the plant is propagated. Of this natural providence instances full many might be given ;—some, as in the foregoing example, have disclosed themselves to the patient insight of the painstaking naturalist—others, again, are of such a kind that “he who runs may read.” But home truths are apt to lose their significance, and consequently the great fundamental fact that the universe exhibits an orderly arrangement and grouping of parts—that it is a cosmos and not a chaos—escapes our notice as an evidence of design, but such it really is.

Consider, again, the mighty expenditure of vital force which characterizes the provision made for the maintenance of the species. “Each living creature must be looked at as a microcosm, a little universe, formed of a host of self-propagating organisms inconceivably minute and as numerous as the stars of heaven.”\* “If the eight or nine million eggs which the roe of a cod is said to contain developed into adult codfishes the sea would quickly become a solid mass of them. The lower organisms multiply with astonishing rapidity, some minute fungi increasing a billion-fold in a few hours, while the protococcus, or red snow, multiplies so fast as to tinge many acres of snow with its crimson in a night. Even slow-breeding man has doubled in twenty-five years.”† Now why this lavish profusion of nature’s costliest treasure? Why the impetuosity of the sexual instinct,

\* Darwin’s *Variation of Animals and Plants*, ii., 404.

† Clodd’s *Story of Creation*, pp. 169-70.

which—if we except the craving for food and the instinct of self-preservation—is second to none? Plainly that the object of so important a function shall in no wise fail of its fulfilment. And to come now to the point of the matter—for the mind of man cannot rest in a belief which would give the lie to nature's plan just when it is about to touch concerns of the highest moment—we naturally ask, if provision has been made for lower faculties and inferior creatures, is it possible that that which is the most precious thing of all—dearer to the heart of man than even life itself—is it possible that this has been treated as a matter of slight or doubtful value? But rightly to consider this matter will give a somewhat different turn to our discussion.

It has been our aim in the preceding pages to trace the community of action in the domains of natural and spiritual law. It is now time to indicate in plainer terms their essential difference. For while, it is true, human existence has in it much that is common to all other spheres of activity, it is, at the same time, distinguishable from these by the possession of a faculty the like of which does not appear anywhere else in the kingdoms of nature. We have referred to the life spiritual—the life of moral endeavour, as the truly human life. Let us pursue this train of thought by observing that when we speak of laws spiritual and moral we have already left the province of animality; we have henceforward to do, not with animals, but with men and with persons. And further to illustrate the *personal* character here referred to, let us take some simple example such as the following. Suppose, while walking along the street on a winter's day, we happen to pass a dwelling at the moment when snow is slipping over the roof. It is of course, far from agreeable to have a discharge of cold

snow down your neck, yet, under the circumstances, we do not feel any resentment—we may feel annoyed, but we suffer no sense of wrong. But suppose now we are struck by a snow-ball from some mischievous hand, our feelings are quite different ; and however much we may enter into the joke, we cannot help resenting the act as a gratuitous insult, and should not be sorry to see the offender chastised for his impudence. In other words natural law is impersonal, and hence if we suffer injury therefrom we feel it would be silly, and indeed useless, to complain ; but when we sustain an injury through another person we feel aggrieved, and think we have a right to protest.

Now there can be no doubt that salutary or necessary as the action of natural law may in general respects be, it is oftentimes fraught with the greatest misery to the individual, and that through no fault of his own. A man is often involved in disasters and ills which have no shadow of connection with his personal deserts. "As for nature," cried one, whose life of brilliant promise was cut short by a cruel disease—one, too, who loved as few have done nature's works and ways, "as for nature, everything in her is anti-human. Nothing in nature cares for man."\* "It is no wonder," says another writer, "with so traitorous a scheme of things, if the wise people who created for us the idea of Pan thought that of all fears the fear of him was the most terrible, since it embraces all."† Yes, Pan is cruel. But the moral law is never cruel or unjust. Whatsoever a man here sows, he most assuredly shall reap. A sense of guilt and trouble is never the portion of those who have obeyed the voice of conscience. If we have fulfilled the

\* Richard Jefferies, the "prose-poet of nature," died Aug. 14th, '87.

† *Virginibus Puerisque*, p. 267.

law of moral obligation we know that, come what may, nothing can take from us the deep and abiding sense of blessedness which this brings ; we have tasted victory ; we are made partakers with the just and good of all times ; we are at peace with God and man.

How different from this are the issues of natural law is told in many a tale of disappointment, disaster, and woe. Let a man lay his plans and secure his position as he may, he is still the creature of circumstance and the plaything of chance. There is always danger ahead. Misfortune or sickness may stop the cleverest and most cautious in mid-career—some unforeseen trouble can in a moment change the complexion of events and scatter his cherished prospects to the winds—this is always possible ; and that death will sooner or later, no one knows how soon, step in to close the scene, this is quite certain. And when the dread summons comes, as come it must to each, what is it that makes a man content to leave the old familiar haunts ? Not great attainments of the intellect—these, on the contrary, make men loth to leave the scenes of their labours and their triumphs. No, the only thing that is of avail in that last hour is the consciousness of having done one's duty.

Is this then to undervalue the claims of knowledge, to estimate too cheaply wisdom, skill, sagacity, prudence—in a word, those capacities and powers by means of which man has won his empire over the brute creation ; by means of which he battles with disease and death ; which give him therefore the very possibility of a continued existence, and without the exercise of which he would assuredly vanish from off the face of the earth ?

Now to meet the challenge implied in the above query, is, as one might say, to force our hand and to compel us to display in the plainest possible terms a

consideration to which the drift of these remarks has necessarily led. For, be it observed, when *man* is the subject of discussion it is always necessary to ask, Do you mean *man the individual*, or do you mean *mankind the race*? A very different conclusion follows as one or the other is meant—for the interests of the individual are not by any means exactly coincident with the interests of the race.

For observe, to humanity it signifies comparatively little that this one or that one drops out of the ranks of the living—it does not die, but continues on in that slow and, as it seems to us, interminable progression which we call the civilization of the race. It seems, indeed, hardly too much to say that the solemn presence of death in our midst forbids us as *individuals* attaching that superlative value to knowledge which it undoubtedly has for the *race*. To the cultivation and advance of the intellectual powers humanity owes its commanding social position—of this there can be no doubt; but as regards the interests of each individual the dictates of feeling and of conscience carry more weight, are more binding, than the requirements of the intellect. Whether obeyed or not the call of duty is felt to be more authoritative than the claims of expediency and worldly wisdom; when listened to its sanction is more satisfying than theirs. And in the authority of that higher call we recognize also its justice—without which, indeed, it would fail to commend itself to the mind and heart of man—we recognize its justice, inasmuch as to everyone a chance is given.

“ For Knowledge is a steep which few may climb,  
But Duty is a path which all may tread.”

Few have the opportunity of cultivating the arts of learning and knowledge to such an extent as to reap

any very substantial benefit therefrom,—and if a devotion to arts and letters bring distinction and social preferment, this is, after all, not always synonymous with happiness; in other words, brilliancy of intellect is inadequate to procure that which is the *summum bonum* of every living creature. But none can say he has been denied the occasion to exercise his native talent and to attain felicity in the sphere of moral endeavour; the “trivial task, the daily round” gives scope and room enough for the display of spiritual faculty. This is the only sphere of action in which man may (if he choose) be master of his own destiny—life itself may cease, but there has still been the opportunity of doing one’s duty—this is the only true sphere of option. It is also the sphere of merit.

But physical law takes no account of personal merit, physical necessity makes no exception in favour of the pious and the godly; the “salt of the earth” enjoy no monopoly of this world’s goods, no immunity from this world’s ills. Worthy and unworthy, saint and sinner, they are all alike; all go down before this Juggernaut, crushed with the same pitiless, imperturbable *sang froid*.

It is not that nature is indifferent to virtue. Nature never intended that the splendid physique should be wasted in a life of wantonness and self-seeking—this is as contrary to the eternal fitness of things as that the fortune amassed by the life-long toil of an industrious ancestor should be miserably squandered in the casino or betting-ring; but the truth is, let us again repeat—for the mistake is so easily made, and it vitiates the whole argument—the truth is that nature has her eye, if we may so express it, on the race and not on the individual. Unmindful though she may seem as far as the indi-

vidual is concerned, she cannot be unmindful of morality in the race—*in grossen ganzen*, for morality makes for the higher civilization. So that, while it is a cruel injustice that the sins of the forefathers should be visited upon their innocent descendants—while it is a cruel injustice for the individual, it is often the happiest thing for the race. Plainly—as far as the individual is concerned—nature cannot be invoked on the side of justice: no more is she to be relied on in the sense of a guarantee. This man may have taken care to render himself an expert swimmer—it does not follow that he shall escape a watery grave. Another takes all possible precautionary measures against fire, and plants his dwelling on the rock: has he thereby made a covenant with the lightning that it shall not strike, or with the earthquake that it shall not topple his house over and bury him in the ruins? No; nature is no covenant, keeping God for man. “For all science can tell, human history may be closed in the next instant of time,” were the words of an able scientific inquirer, who himself fell a too early victim to the fatal action of natural law.\*

VIII.—INADEQUACY OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO TAKE THE PLACE  
OF RELIGIOUS CONVICTION—PERSONAL CHARACTER OF THE MORAL  
LAW PROOF PRESUMPTIVE OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

By considerations such as these we may understand the essential difference which prevails between the moral and the natural law; that the one is personal and special—right and wrong being something peculiar to the human individual, and in special relation to each one's particular circumstances, opportunities, and temperament—while this character is wholly wanting in the other.

\* Professor Stanley Jevons was drowned whilst bathing off the south coast of England in the summer of 1882.

Yet there are not wanting persons who would make the knowledge of natural law—or, in a word, science—the sovereign guide for the conduct of life. Of the many voices of the age, this is one, and one which professes to speak with an authority from which there is no appeal. The deference paid to natural science is a leading feature of the present era, and not without reason. All departments of human activity show signs of the penetrating and vitalizing effects of a far more successful practice of the scientific method than seems to have been known to the peoples of earlier times. The result of this appears in the improvement in social comfort and convenience which is the boast of the nineteenth century. Nor is that all; men's minds have been freed from the bondage of ignorance, superstition, and error—freed from the baleful influence of the medicine-man, the mystery-monger, and magician of old, with his spells and lying wonders; the tyranny of priestcraft has been assailed; the day of oracles is past—and all this is due, or at any rate, largely due, to the healthful influence of scientific knowledge. “Our Darwins, our Lyalls, Herschels, Faradays—all the immense army of those that go down to nature with considering eye—are steadfastly undermining and obliterating the superstitious past, literally burying it under endless loads of accumulated facts, and the printing-presses, like so many Argos, take these facts on their voyage round the world.”\*

The benefit is, however, not without its alloy. The impetus of the pendulum has carried it too far. Hence it comes about that there is, nowadays, a very prevalent (and, under the circumstances, a very natural) tendency to the over-laudation of natural science, and to accredit it with powers and tasks which do not lie in its province.

\* Richard Jefferies, *Fortnightly Review*, May, 1887, p. 653.

It has been hoped that people might become virtuous through knowledge—that the enlightening influences of scientific culture might open their eyes to the reasonableness of duty. Science has been asked, in fine, to step into the place of religion.

Now if the facts and inferences submitted in the foregoing paragraphs be worthy of acceptance, it will be readily seen that this were to make a most serious mistake. Indeed the experiment has been tried before, and has not proved a success. For it is a general rule, observable as well in the biography of the individual as in the history of a nation, that loss of faith in God is attended by the most deplorable results.

Yet we cannot handle this subject without the question arising, Is it really necessary there should be this deadlock between religion and science? It is of course true that the existence of God is not discoverable by the scientific method; but let us, on the other hand, observe that the course of scientific inquiry is one long illustration of the fact that certain *working-hypotheses* must be believed in—and, for practical purposes, acted on—which are nevertheless not always susceptible of proof. Now the most important working-hypothesis for the conduct of the life spiritual is a belief in the existence of God; but it is impossible to be quite sure about it in the only way in which certainty has any meaning for sense and science.

But if, now, we inquire into the matter attentively we shall observe that no one says he is *sure* there is *no* God; the atheist's postulate is that he is *not sure* there *is* one. "I simply do not know," says the agnostic, "I have no proof, and in the absence of what I consider to be proof, I am, as an honest man, bound to withhold my assent. For all I know," he may continue, "there

*may be such a being as God, but I have no knowledge or evidence of such. What I deny is, not the existence of God, but my knowledge of the same. My position is one simply of negation, nescience, or suspense of judgment.*" And there being no proof to the minds of persons who hold this language, they are quite convinced of one thing, namely, that it is folly to believe in religious truth. Yet others, again, are equally persuaded this is the highest wisdom. And under the circumstances the question is not susceptible of a settlement. No one supposes God is to be found out by the methods of natural science, and there is no voice from the dead to tell us whether there be a hereafter in which spiritual faculty—here so infantile and embryonic—shall have a better chance of attaining its full stature. We may make guesses, but nature gives no guarantee that guesses shall come true—it may very likely be so, but we cannot know for certain.

Now it is undeniable that the important thing for man—as indeed for every other creature on the face of the earth—is to achieve his end, to fulfil the law of his being. In comparison with this supreme object aught else assumes an attitude of insignificance, if not of impertinence and trifling. The best credential a thing can have in the eyes of rational men is as it contributes to this end. The practical effect which opinions and beliefs have upon the present life is really all that sensible men care about—that which *works best is best in the life which now is.*

And, looking at the matter from a purely common-sense and utilitarian point of view, must it not be owned that it is, after all, those who are true to a religious or devout motive that are in the best position to render life a success and not a failure? For where does man

find that lifting-power which provides the motive to moral action, and is in fact the guarantee for all spiritual energy ; which not only satisfies the heart but equips it for action ; which not only makes us see our duty (science can do that), but makes us do it—where does man find this save in the force of religious conviction ? To lose faith is to lose heart ; to permit faith's tide to ebb—when nothing is left but its "melancholy long withdrawing roar,"—is to sap the very foundations of active service.

We have called the moral law *personal*, because its action is according to personal merit. That is to say we recognize in it a character which we are cognizant of nowhere else in the wide universe of nature save in ourselves and our fellow men. And yet this rule of right, this call of duty, is none of our own making or fashioning ; it is even as the great stream of cosmic order into which we are born, and upon which we are from first to last irresistibly swept along. To the one as to the other we must perforce (if not in outward speech and act, at any rate in inward conviction) bow and pay homage, as to some sovereign power which is external to us, and something "not-ourselves"—to this one often with lamentations and loud complaints—to that other with a consciousness of rectitude which seals our lips and makes us dumb. And if we recognize this personal character in the law of moral obligation, while we at the same time feel we have been no party to its origin or plan, does it not seem *as if* there were Someone standing behind this moral law ? We say *as if*, because the very nature of the case places it beyond the possibility of a proof that shall satisfy the requirements of sense and science.

We have repeatedly referred to the fact that if force

is to be manifested and known—if it is to take part in the history of a physical world, it must ally itself with the materials of earth, it must be clothed with an earthly garment, furnished with an earthly home. And how can there be any adequate, or, indeed, any conceivable, embodiment of a principle or law which operates in every human breast other than the persons of those living men and women in whom it so operates? Is not that higher self—which is also the true human self—the real temple of the Most High? As an instance of the full display of that which in other men is no more than embryonic, the incarnation of Christ is of mighty significance—and the same may be averred of every other true *avatar*—but such a manifestation of the divine Power still remains something external to us, in the same sense as each man is external to his fellow. In proportion as any power is located and limited in place and time does it lose in universality. And obviously so: if it is here, it is not there; if it was then, it is not now. Nor is such a view inconsistent with Christian dogma. Our Saviour Himself referred to the coming of the Holy Ghost—or God in us—as to a fuller and more worthy manifestation of the divine Power than could possibly be effected by the narrow limits of His own ministry.

Yet once more, how do we know when we retire, so to speak, into the innermost chamber of the soul—how do we know that we meet there with the divine Presence? Upon what ground or authority can such a statement be made—a statement which mocks the evidence of sense? Perhaps we only *think* so because others are away or out of sight; solitude is a fertile source of unfounded fancies. The ideal or better self is that part of the human economy which is, in the truest sense of the term, the human “*ego*,” that part of our

composite nature which is, properly speaking, *ourselves* ;—what warrant have we for supposing there is anything here *except* ourselves ?

Our warrant, we reply, lies in the very constitution of our being, namely in our sense of moral consciousness. We know, or may know, whether we are obeying the higher mandate, or whether we are not obeying it, just as we know whether we are happy or in pain. About this there can be no manner of doubt ; it is a fact of personal experience common to every man, woman, and child—at least in civilized countries. But beyond this fact of personal experience knowledge does not go. And yet a moral necessity points to something beyond : we *infer* the existence of a personal being who is in touch with the humanity within us, and this we do on the strength of the personal character of the moral law. We cannot *know* it, but we may believe it.

Most distinctly does nature, with her laws, say—"This you cannot know." And man, if he is wise, will listen and submit, and not be angry and rebel. For if he will, he may also hear another voice, and a voice which is connected with all that he most prizes ; for it speaks to him of justice—and this is the very life of his soul ; and its message is—" You may believe."

Now, to return once again to the practical issue (which is indeed the sum of the whole matter), this assumption, this belief in the Godhead, we have referred to as something in the nature of a working-hypothesis ; for experience testifies to the mighty influence religion wields in moulding the life and character of man. Experience teaches, too, that when men or nations make light of—lose their hold of—this assumption, they quickly go astray. Hence the mischief of any scheme which would aim at putting scientific knowledge in the

place of religious conviction. There may be much to be said for it, as against the all too frequent alliance of religion with superstition and myth—its facile declension into fetish, hypocrisy, and cant; there is much to be said for it, but there is one fatal objection—it does not work.

In the hey-day of passion a knowledge of natural laws is about as capable of restraining the animal within as ropes of sand a Hercules or Samson. If a youth is hardly kept from "sowing his wild oats" by the observance of the law of God, the laws of physiology will not stand him in better stead. True, the path of chastity and virtue may be indicated by the dictates of discretion and good sense. A man may know full well that if he engage in some wrong course of action he will suffer in health, in position, or in peace of mind. But the tempest of desire is upon him, and forces the conviction that this unwise or iniquitous act is indispensable to present ease or profit. Of little avail is scientific culture in some passion-shaken hour. If prudence whispers caution, desire is always ready with its "I know better." Unless touched by the magic of a devout motive, judgment is no match for passion. It takes feeling to conquer feeling, and it is no ordinary earth-bound impulse that will make the soul shrink from sin, as the body starts from the touch of some sharp instrument.

But, truth to say, man does not know that his happiness, as a human being, hinges on his non-compliance with evil. He does not know it with that finished assurance which is at once the token and the triumph of instinct; and, what is more, he will never know it as long as he lives. In such matters the experience of the individual goes for very little; it may set bounds to opportunity, but it does not transmute the character of

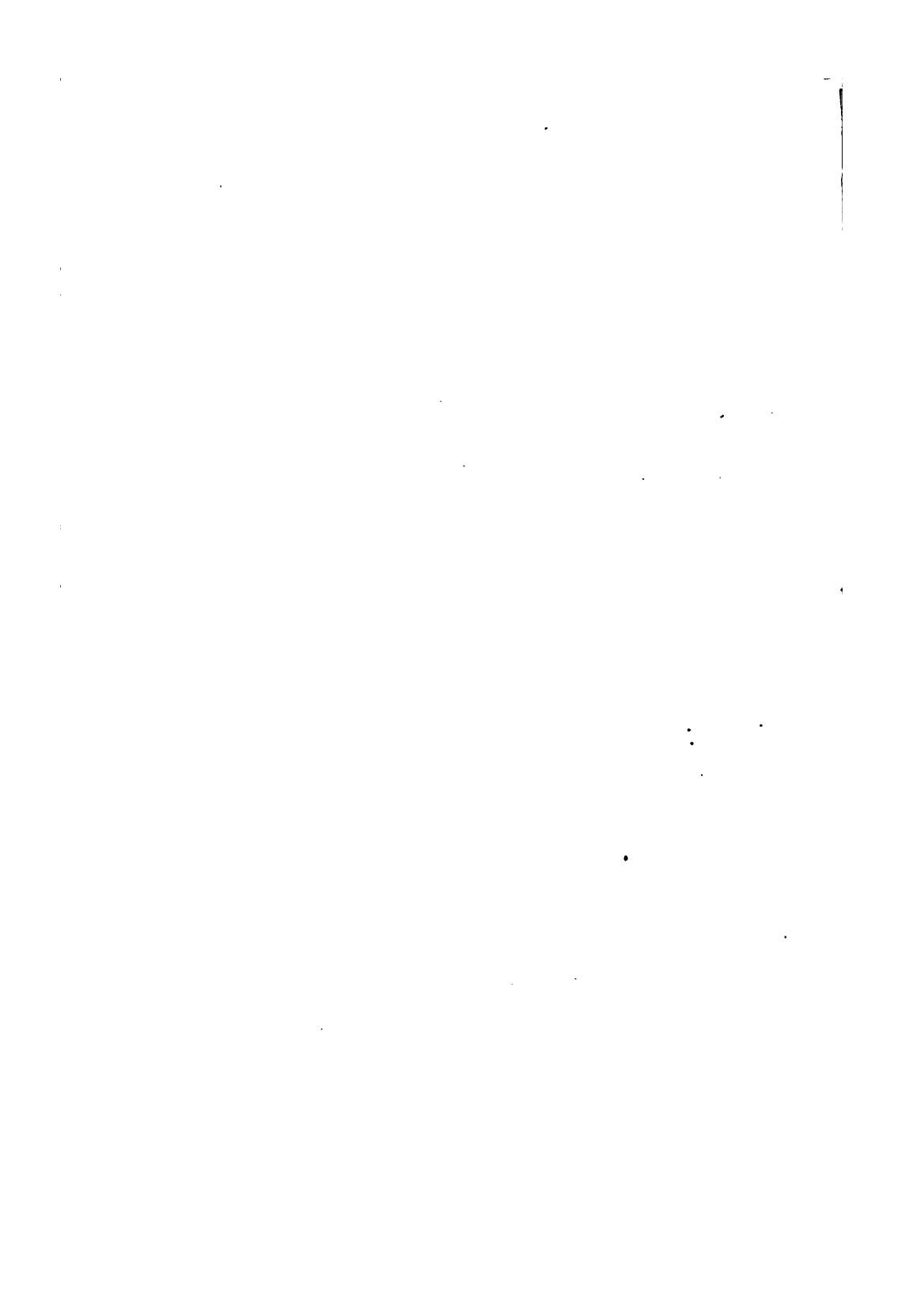
lust ; it cannot change the heart. What though disappointment dogs the seductions of sense, who is there will act upon the knowledge of this while pleasure is singing her Lorelei-lay, and passion's pulse beats high ! If there be poison in the cup it is delicious poison, and that is argument enough for creatures who are born to enjoy.

Let it not be forgotten, also, that the fine finish of instinct is not the product of a single lifetime—it took ages to bring it to perfection. No more can the short span of individual life suffice to learn the lesson of moral obligation through the schoolings of experience. Sin is as pleasant at sixty as it was at twenty—it is not only the little people whose years are few, that find it *nicer to be naughty than to be good*. For as long as life lasts that inferior nature is there also, and the natural law is far more in league with it than with the better self. It must ever seem a strange and unaccountable thing that man should turn against himself, repress his natural desires, and make loss and pain his portion. But if brute knowledge fails to convince him it is to his best interest so to do, he may, if he take heed, *believe* that it is—on the strength of moral or religious conviction ; and this belief shall guide him into truth, even as instinct guides dumb animals.

The spiritual and the natural law—let us have the courage to confess it—are separated by a chasm which no quibbling can blink or overlook. If we fuse together things so disparate we cannot hope to escape an embarrassing confusion of thought.

The extermination of dark races by the whites, the preying of the stronger upon the weak, is the sacrifice of private interests to the general welfare. “The old order changeth for the new,” and who can tell the

amount of misery entailed! But this is the law of nature : a law which teaches the beasts of the field to harry and to slay each other with fierce and brutal lust ; a law of might, not of right ; a law which punishes, not wickedness, but weakness ; a law concerning which, therefore, our human ideas of right and wrong, of merit and of mercy, are absolutely foreign and out of place. The scene of cruelty, and (as it seems to us) of unavailing pain, which we see around us is revolting to the justice-loving mind of man. This intolerable sight mocks his best feelings ; his conscience is torn with a passion of indignant protest. "This may," he cries, "be the law of nature, but it certainly is not the law of humanity, and it is blasphemy to call it the law of God." But stay ; are we so sure of our powers of judgment ? If judgment be sufficient for the short span of life allotted to man, this is not to say it is fitted to reach backward and forward and solve all conceivable mysteries and problems, past, present, and to come. Certainly the presumption is that it is not. The ant is a remarkably sagacious little creature, but what does it know of the great world in which it lives ? Now mankind is but an insect race, inhabiting a bit of matter which is as a mote in the sunbeam. But if not much wiser (and such is the opinion of modern savants) man is assuredly very superior to the ant ; and we may well believe he has been made in the image of God—not so much by reason of his superior wit, as by reason of his recognition of the moral law ; and if this is so—if man is so superior to aught else in that he is a moral being—it were perhaps time enough for him to instruct his Maker when he himself is more disposed to act as he ought.



II.

*CONCERNING THE REAL SELF  
OR “EGO” IN MAN.*

*Who finds himself, loses his misery.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and  
lose his own soul?*

GOSPEL OF ST. MARK.

## II.

# Concerning the Real Self or "Ego" in Man.

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I.—PRELIMINARY SURVEY—CHARACTER—CONTROL—WILL—  
ATTENTION—MOTIVES.

A MAN cannot see his face except he look in a glass ; how shall he project the image of his inner being that it too may become the object of regard ? The pen seems but a poor tool for the purpose at the best. And then, do not all intuitive truths defy description ; does not their very nearness put the mental focus to an impossible strain ? But there is nothing so intuitive and native to each as his own soul, his real self or "ego," as *himself*, in short. To summon so retiring a party to the bar of critical inquiry is, it is therefore plain, a matter of some difficulty. Yet this is the task before us.

The fact is, we take ourselves far too much for granted, thus to "stand and deliver,"—to come forth out of the fastnesses of selfhood, and make the survey in question. In truth, the same inertia is felt to clog the wheels of thought every time we endeavour to fix the attention upon that which lies so close to us, as to enter into our necessary conception of things—the weight of the air, for instance, the motion of the earth,

the functioning of the organs of our bodily frame. Who thinks of these things ? They are so natural, so purely a matter of course, that they do not strike our notice ; —just as the objects in the home of our childhood have grown so familiar that they fall beneath the level of consciousness, until our attention is aroused, perhaps, by the observations of a stranger. How much more then do we encounter this source of embarrassment when the theme is something so very familiar as Ourselves !

Again, it is the method of scientific thought to generalize. But how describe in general terms what is so special to each ? And, truth to say, science is no respecter of persons. It has to do with man in general, *en masse*, not with individual men ; it deals with averages not with particularities. Science speaks of *the* brain, *the* skeleton, *the* ego, without stopping to inquire *whose* ; it discusses knowledge without pausing to consider the knower—pleasure and pain, without a thought of the rejoicer or the sufferer. And this must needs be so. If we did not leave the individual and special and launch out into the general, there would be no knowledge worth the name,—nay more, we cannot help generalizing ; the necessities of our being demand it, for man is born to know.

And yet that there should be any question at all concerning a man's real self or ego, will seem to some—we are thinking of what is called the practical turn of mind—but as a learned trifling, and an inquiry into the same a vain and idle thing. And no wonder if those who have battled through life's route with little space or pause to look about and muse should regard such inquiries with impatience. These will have decided the matter in their own way—not as a learned theory, not as the subject of entertaining or curious

research, but simply as the lesson, inevitable, inexorable, of this one life of ours, which is "full of meaning as of mystery, tho' strange and solemn may that meaning be."

For what indeed can touch the soul or ego ! Can loss of place and power, of wealth, of fame, or position ? No, these things may shake terribly a man's nerve, but they do not touch his soul. He who comes home some evening to tell his wife that "All is lost," can still say, "But I have you,—and you—and you," as the little ones cling around his knee. But let a deadlier blow befall, let the fond wife be torn from her husband's side ; let the father lose his darling child—some merry rogue, the jewel of his heart and life—does not this wound self to the quick, and with a scar that shall never be healed ? Is not something of the self gone forth and lies buried in the grave ? But let the blow descend again, and let it be the physical well-being of the individual that is now invaded ; let a man lose a member of his body, a limb, a sense. Well, this certainly curtails the possibilities of life—sightless, maimed, in pain, the man is certainly in a bad way—still, for all that, the "ego" may display much, if not all its native vigour. But to draw nearer still, let disease lay its finger on the mind—that citadel of man's character and thought—let the mind be unhinged, and man reduced to the level of the cowering brute,—surely this is the eclipse of the "ego." Although physical life should continue as before, this were but a living death—is, in fact, worse than if the bodily frame be removed by death. Sometimes the terrible alternative presents itself when life is pitted against that which a man feels to be the true law, the imperative demand, of his being, when the one can be saved only at the expense of the other—one or the

other. But if life be thus sacrificed in some great agony of heroic effort, we do not say a man has lost himself,—*life* may be lost, but this may be the very means whereby a man shall save his soul, his real self or ego.

Now there are many things we naturally associate with our idea of such-and-such a person—his place and time; his work and social position; his habits and tastes, expressed in daily sayings and doings; even his form and personal appearance, so familiar to us by sight. These are the coverings, the wrappings and trappings of our real *me*. All these things combine, it is true, to form the character—the country where anyone is born, the house he lives in, the very clothes he wears, all bear some relation to his life and character, but they do not, of course, constitute *himself*.

But surely a man's character is only another name for his true self? At first sight it would seem so. The justice of a different view becomes apparent, however, if we reflect that many points in character are attributable to the force of circumstances, to heredity, upbringing, and the like, and that such matters may not improbably be the subject of regret to the individual, and yet are quite beyond his power of control—can be helped as little, perhaps, as the form of his features or the colour of his hair. Character is like a picture, to which the man himself contributes, it is true, the chief share—and in so far as this is the case it is undoubtedly a fair sample of the real self—but a picture, which, it must also be said, owes its features to other agencies as well. The life-history of the human individual is the result of many influences, and not like its counterpart in the drama or romance, the creation of one master-mind. A man's real self or ego and the *tableaux* o:

his character are not, by any means, identically the same. What we want to discover is not so much the picture, as the painter.

Again we use the term "force of character," and say so-and-so has much or little, a good or a bad character, conveying thereby our sense of the differences between man and man. By the self or ego, is to be understood, however, that which each and every human being, singly and severally, and irrespective of differences of sex, of temperament, and what not, equally possesses, and in virtue of which he or she belongs to the *genus homo*; something which attaches to every individual who is of sound mind, and has arrived at years of discretion, of whom one may predicate an individuality or personality of his or her own, who may, in short, be called a *person*. Yet this is not all.

"We are not ourselves from the first; we only become so by an act of will," says Vinet. And again, "We have to look after ourselves almost as if we were somebody else." To be self-possessed is indeed of the first importance to every rational being. To say there is nothing of such importance as Ourselves is not presumption—it is, on the contrary, the truest philosophy and the most sober wisdom. Self is the weightiest concern everybody has got to attend to;—'tis the citadel, and if it be secured a man shall laugh at fate, *impavidum feriunt ruinae*. Like Job, the shocks of fortune shall pass him by unscathed. But if not, if a man be not master of himself, there is no knowing to what lengths he may be driven through stress of circumstances—there is really no security against the worst of evils, the most heinous of crimes. For it makes all the difference as to the quarter from which control comes. To be held in check from the centre, from within, is a totally different

thing from being kept in check by some alien force from without. The first is a matter of principle, and is therefore something in the nature of sustenance to the ego ; the other (unless converted into the first by an effort of will) is wholly injurious, it ruffles and frets the temper, and is destructive of the very integrity of self. An army held in check from headquarters is an accumulation of strength and leads to success—checked and repulsed on its periphery, it is thrown into disorder, and this means defeat. Indeed it is hardly too much to say that the conduct of life is never secure if a man be not *collected* ; if that quality of mind (or rather attitude of will) be lacking which is called *recollectedness*.

Considerations such as these prepare the way for a true conception of the real self or ego. For by this term we do not mean some fine-spun metaphysical conception, the elaborate product of philosophical speculation—and which, while it presents itself to consciousness as a necessity of thought, we are nevertheless told is a pure illusion. We mean something which—far from being a phantom of this shadowy will-o'-the-wisp sort of type—is not only the one single thing which everybody is most sure of, but is, to tell the truth, the *only* thing that anybody can be quite certain about.

By the “ego” we mean that spiritual or moral faculty in man whereby he is conscious of moral obligation, whereby he is able to do (and is blessed in the consciousness of having done) his duty ; by which alone he is entitled to the best regard of his fellows ; which is the only surety of his happiness and hope, and by reason of which he is different from every other creature under the sun. And although no one wants a book to teach him something which he can best learn from his own heart, it may not be without interest to indicate the

workings of this self-conscious and conscience-guided will—this force peculiar to man—in connection with the mechanism, bodily and mental, with which it is associated.

*Will* is a little word, but it has to do duty for something very complex, not to say very mysterious. In the first place, we must split the word *will* into two other words—equally unpretending in appearance and equally pregnant in meaning. If a man say, “I will,” there is something more meant than if he were to say, “I wish,”—he also means, “I can.” “Your advice,” said a patient of the celebrated physician Esquirol, “is thoroughly good; I should ask nothing better than to follow it if you could further oblige me with the power to *will what I please.*” This unnatural divorce of the *wish* and the *can* of volition is illustrated again in the case of the individual who spends an hour in attempting to put a flourish under his signature, or tries in vain “with hat and gloves on to leave his room and go out to see a pageant which he much wished to see.” Everybody is familiar with that unpleasant experience in dreaming when one is seized with the most lively desire to escape some danger which threatens, and yet is unable to stir; in spite of the urgent necessity for flight you remain rooted to the spot; let the wish be ever so pressing the power of giving effect to it is wanting. Mere wishing carries us but a very little way, and we are accustomed to draw a very practical distinction betwixt a man’s *wishes* and his *intentions*—the latter term necessarily conveying the idea of carrying into execution if opportunity permits.

Moreover, the will must not be thought of apart from the feelings which constitute our motives to action. Now diverse as motives may be, there can be no doubt

that the highest and best are those which are moral in their nature. And further, it is not difficult to see why this will-ability which belongs to every healthy human being should be in an especial manner connected with matters of conscience, for in no other way could it be a universal principle in man, in no other way could it have been open to all. If all cannot command success, wisdom, wealth, or pleasure—if fortune's favourites are few, it will be conceded that every one may (to use a homely phrase) *be good*, if he or she likes. Conscience is the pole to which man's inner being ever vibrates. To conceive otherwise were to misunderstand the purposes of nature, and to call her methods in question when displayed in her latest and best.

Now whatever may be the nature and ultimate destiny of the human spirit, it is for the present chained to earth, and all our knowledge derives from an earthly environment. The human organism—our muscular system by which we move and act, our brain by which we feel and think—is just as much a portion of matter as “the chair which supports me or the ground on which I tread.” But matter is permeated by the forces of nature, and our physical frame is the centre or nucleus of certain physical forces which are thus in a position to lend themselves to the service of our will. However much, then, it may *seem* as if the vigour of our arm, or the energy of our brain were something identical with ourselves, we must understand that the force thus manifested does not derive originally from ourselves but from the world in which we live. That this is so may be gathered from the fact that the human organism may be set in action by agencies other than its rightful owner and proprietor—by electricity, for instance. All the phenomena of muscular movement can be mimicked

by passing the electric current, by which means our limbs may be jerked about in the most ridiculous fashion exactly as if they did not belong to us. The facts to be presently laid before the reader will, moreover, show how much there is in a man which is not truly *his*, how that—submerged under the hurrying tide of his conscious life—there lies a region of memory which is almost as foreign to his individuality as the tissues of his bodily frame, for, as a matter of fact, the materials of the one as of the other do actually and equally derive *ab extra*, from the world without.

Everybody knows that a great part of the human economy can take care of itself, unaided and unheeded by our conscious will; but it is a fact less generally realized that operations may take place in the hidden laboratory of mind, traits of character may there be formed, which are unknown to a man's conscious self, and if known would be stoutly denied as being *his*. Where the control of the ego is abolished (as it is, for instance, in sleep), thoughts may invade the brain, words be uttered, and actions done, which would not for a moment be sanctioned by the individual himself, and for which he is as little responsible as if they were to take place in his absence, or be said and done by somebody else. "The most extraordinary thing occurred to me last night," said a young monk laughingly to his father superior, with whom he was on the very best of terms, "I dreamt I was seized with the desire to kill you, my father; I entered your room and stabbed you to the heart. What precious fools sleep does make of us!" The abbé said nothing, but took care, that night when the monk retired to rest, that his key should be turned in the lock, for this is what had happened:—the night being sultry, the abbé had risen from his bed and

stood a moment at the window, when, suddenly, the door opened and the monk aforesaid entered, apparently in a state of great excitement, and with a knife in his hand,—then proceeding to the bed he stabbed once and again in the bedclothes and as hastily retired! The feelings of the good abbé can be imagined, and hence his precautionary measures against a repetition of so unwelcome a visit.

Precisely the same abeyance of the control of the ego, and consequent deterioration in character, is known to occur as a symptom of brain disease. A man of pure and blameless character has a paralytic stroke, and as he lies in this unconscious, selfless condition, the incoherent utterances of the wandering mind may be interlarded with expressions which he would be the very last to use in his conscious moments,—an example, this, of the involuntary reproduction of things which nobody can help seeing and hearing, however much their judgment may disapprove. Now shocking or grotesque as may be the things said or done in such a condition as this, they are, of course, not worthy of blame; they do but excite our pity. "Poor fellow," we say, "he cannot help it." There is a tacit understanding that the real self or ego is not to be held responsible for such things.

Let us note, further, it needs but a little reflection to convince oneself that the foundation of our conscious and sentient life is laid in our sensations—in those capacities of sense and movement which are the common heritage of every living creature. Consider, for instance, how memory, which forms so large a part of our conscious existence, is absolutely dependent upon those images of the actual objects of sense which are stored-up in the brain. Let anyone think of anything

he please—be the subject thought of ever so ideal or abstract—and he must own that thought were impossible without the *remembered objects of sense*.

Nor can any conception of human life be considered satisfactory or just which does not recognize to the full man's dependence on his environment, or *milieu*. But the point which we desire to emphasize is this:—that the forces of the physical world enter into relation with our consciousness, only on condition there is an act of attention on our part. That is to say, unless we will give heed to the impressions of our senses, they are apt to pass below the level of consciousness, and are never more within the power of voluntary recall. In order clearly to see an object, it is not enough that light impinge on the eye ;—true, the retinal picture is formed, but there is no distinct vision unless the eye be focussed. And we do, indeed, purposely *un-focus* the eye, or, at any rate, permit it to “stand at ease,” when we are pursuing some train of thought, and do not wish to be disturbed by the objects which surround us. If a man be busied in thought, there may be much going on around him of which he is, however, most profoundly unconscious. How completely does the striking of the clock escape his notice—there might, as far as he is concerned, be the deepest silence—yet do the waves of sound beat all the same on the drum of his ear. Now an act of attention just means the determination or directing of will-power in one channel rather than another ; it is something done of set purpose and by choice. The responsibility of choice is, indeed, a thing which nobody can shirk. Whether he will do this or that, or refrain from doing this or that ; whether he will attend to this or that part of the stream of sensation which perpetually bathes his organism—everybody

is always, during his waking hours, exercising the faculty of choice.

Yet, strange to say, some have denied the power of choice in man. Nor is the reason of this far to seek. We have observed that the force of the human organism is not generated from within, but is, in reality, derived *ab extra* from the world which surrounds us ; and so, too, the experiences and feelings which go to form the tissue of our conscious life. It might be affirmed, then, that our will is but the puppet of ideas and feelings which rise unbidden in the mind and move it—we call them motives—this way or that.

But what, let us ask, are the motives to any course of action other than the reasons a man has for doing that action ? Herein consists his rationality, in short ; and thus much do we expect of him. If anyone persist in some irrational course of conduct—uttering words which have no meaning, harbouring jealousies which have no foundation, starting large business connections without capital, and the like—suspicion is aroused. We begin to ask—Is he right in his mind ? Now to say an individual is compelled to do a certain thing because he has his reasons for doing it, and therefore wishes to do it, is not only to give altogether a new meaning to coercion, it is also to confound things so contrary as states passive and states active. For what can be more different than to follow the bent of one's own desire on the one hand, and, on the other, to be *obliged* to do a thing which is, perhaps, sorely against one's will and judgment. Obviously there is a world of difference in any sense which makes criticism of value. Look at the child crowing with delight on first finding itself able to walk ; look at the same child bathed in tears as it is borne away by its nurse contrary to its

wish—one is a picture of pleasure, the other is the picture of woe. What can be more different? A mesmerized person, again, may be caused, at the bidding of another, to do things which are foreign, and perhaps positively repugnant to his natural bent or desire. But to be forced to do a thing against one's will is to be the tool of another; the man who acts thus belongs for the time being to that other, and not to himself. If a thing be done under compulsion we say, "I have not done it *myself*; I am not responsible for it; you must not blame *me* for it." Now the true self or ego is the stamp or insignia which declares, "That is mine; that is done with my consent and sanction."

True, men do not always see to it that their doings bear this sign-manual—*meliora probo, non sequor*. But it remains, for all that, the touchstone of the real self or ego. Man must choose what shall be his; and that, too, in the widest acceptation of the term. He must appropriate to himself from the world within no less than from the world without. For—as far as his "ego" is concerned—the thoughts which lie in anybody's mind might just as well be lying in the mind of somebody else if they do not receive the imprimatur of his moral assent—unless they are, so to speak, *endorsed* by himself.

#### II.—THE MECHANISM OF MEMORY AND SENSATION.

THE significance of the foregoing remarks will acquire both point and amplitude if we pass on, now, to discuss the matter a little more in detail. It will be convenient to deal first with the organism or bodily frame, which puts us *en rapport* with the world around us, and then to

pass in review certain mental phenomena which are still more closely affiliated with the true self or ego.

It is a remarkable fact, when one comes to think of it, that our perception of the world in which we live should be so entirely contingent on the make of the nervous system—and especially so when we reflect that there is, properly speaking, only one thing that can affect our senses, and that is *motion* of some kind or other.

It seems odd, too, that sense should tell us one thing, while our intellect or understanding tells us something quite different. To say that light and heat, and our sensations of touch, taste, hearing, &c., are so many modes of motion is but an absurd quibble to the common-sense of mankind. And yet this is perhaps not more surprising than that the earth—which seems to us like one vast expanse, and so immutably fixed in space—should, in reality, be a round ball revolving on its axis once every twenty-four hours.

There are, however, differences in the extent to which science draws upon our powers of comprehension. The mind has grown familiar with the idea of *waves* of light and sound, and we can readily understand that heat may be a kind of motion in the particles which constitute a body, since we may see things which are heated actually growing bigger. It is also not difficult to connect this notion with forces like chemical attraction and electricity, when we think of the destructive effects of dynamite and gunpowder, or the blasting force of the lightning; and those persons who witnessed a recent experiment at the Royal Institution, in which a magnetic pole was “pushed forward to four times its previous distance” will also experience no difficulty in conceiving magnetism as a mode of motion. But it

takes a very considerable stretch of the imagination to connect this idea with our sense of touch, or with the resistance which objects offer us. That the chair in which I am quietly sitting, or the table on which I rest my hand, really affects me as a species of movement seems to be a statement which is flatly contradicted by the evidence of sense.

And, indeed, it *is* so contradicted. By no quibble can we escape the dilemma that the *it is* or *really* of sense is something different from the *it is* or *really* of the understanding. By no ingenuity can we liberate the discussion of man's multiplex being from the imputation of enigma and paradox. It is, however, necessary to bear in mind that if there is something transcendental in man,—if the human intellect does transcend or outleap the facts given in sensation, it can do so only by quitting one domain of science and entering another;—which comes to much the same thing as saying that in a fair discussion of the nature of man it is necessary one should continually shift one's point of view. But this is no more than we do in the concerns of ordinary life. If we would gain a just estimate of some building or object of interest we must look at it all round, and not from one side alone.

If then it be true that sensation is, for each of us, the great original gateway of knowledge—the channel or inlet by which the forces of nature do come into communication with our ego and affect us, is it not possible to give some account of this so curious progression, which in its commencement is something plainly not ourselves, but ends in something which seems most truly our own?

Matter and force, heat, light and sound as observed in external nature are all, no doubt, very interesting

subjects of investigation to the physical inquirer—but what concerns us most is to know how it is that we see and hear and feel, how we are conscious of the world around us.

If a wire be wound round a piece of soft iron and a current of electricity passed through it, the iron will acquire the properties of a magnet. These properties are familiar enough—the power a magnet has of making other bits of iron cleave to it, and the tendency of the needle to point to the pole—and this imparted power is believed to be due to a peculiar change or rearrangement in the particles of the metal, called *polarity*.\* Furthermore, the bar of iron thus magnetized will be itself made to move—if a current of electricity be passed around it: this is, in fact, the principle of the electric telegraph.

Now electricity, by its actions, plainly declares its close kinship to nervous energy. We have already referred to the fact that all the phenomena of muscular movement can be mimicked by the electric force—and what is still more curious, our very sensations may be excited by this means. For instance, if the current be applied to the stump of an amputated limb, sensations may be aroused precisely like those experienced if the limb had really been there, and the person had moved it about at pleasure—if he close his eyes the illusion is perfect. “I recently faradized,” says Dr. Weir Mitchell, “a case of disarticulated shoulder without warning my patient of the possible result. As the current affected the brachial plexus of nerves, he sud-

\* A rearrangement of particles in a solid body is not so mysterious if one is aware that constant stropping will so change the grain of a razor as to cause it to set in quite a different direction; but if allowed to rest for awhile, it will right itself again; and a similar recovery after a period of rest applies also to steel pens.

denly cried aloud, 'Oh, the hand—the hand!' and attempted to seize the missing member. The phantom I had conjured up swiftly disappeared, but no spirit could have more amazed the man, so real did it seem."\* Furthermore, the electric current will cause flashes of light in the eye, sounds in the ear, a phosphoric odour, a peculiar taste, and a prickling feeling in the nerves of common sensation ;—in a word, it appears to be quite at home in those paths of sense and movement which properly belong to the *vis nervosa*.

But where is electricity not at home—in earth, in air, and ocean ? Wherever there is life, wherever there is growth, wherever there is anything at all, in fact, there electricity is to be found. For it is not improbable that every atom of matter may be nothing else than a minute current of electricity. We have spoken of the versatility of force : electricity is the best example of it ; —always appearing, always disappearing and changing into some other mode of force, dynamical, chemical, thermal, or what not.

May not such considerations as these give some clue to the mechanism or *modus in quo* of sensation ? Perhaps it is thus we see and hear and feel ; perhaps the nerve-cells of our brain may be so influenced—polarized, so to say—by the electricity contained in the blood which nourishes them, as that they should be rendered sensible to the action of light and heat and other modes of motion. Take the sense of sight, for instance. It is not enough that rays of light fall upon the retina in order that we may have the sensation of sight ; should the circulation be arrested, or the quality of the blood defective, the image, however well mirrored in the eye, fails nevertheless to reach the brain. It is

\* Mitchell's *Injuries to the Nerves*, 1872, p. 349.

conceivable, then, that the optic tract (that part of the brain through which light travels on its way from the eye to the sensorium) is in a somewhat similar condition to the piece of iron which, encircled by the wires of a galvanic battery, is thrown into the polar or magnetic state, and that the sensation of vision is the final result in the one case, as the movement of the telegraphic needle is in the other.

This is only a theory, of course. But we cannot help theorizing. "To think on nature is to theorize," was said by one of the most cautious and, at the same time, most respected of scientific inquirers.\* And if, while endeavouring to trace the connection between the physical forces of external nature and the cerebro-spinal force of the living brain, we must confess our inability to explain how out of these factors a resultant like sensation can arise, we may reflect that the same mystery attaches also to the simplest things which are taking place in the world around us. Oxygen and hydrogen together produce the water of the brook—viewless carbon of the air forms the main bulk of the forests of the earth. Is not this natural magic just as incomprehensible as that certain forces in nature should give rise to certain sensations in our brain?

But sensation is not thought. Every intelligent man is probably aware that while his thoughts are busy with their own concerns a multitude of operations are going on in his physical frame, and many of these are guided by sensation. If one moves across a room while occupied in thought one need not knock against tables and chairs, although one is not in the least thinking about them. To be conscious of our sensations we must, as before said, be attentive to them, and this implies an exer-

\* Sir W. R. Grove, *Correlation of Physical Forces*, 6th edition, p. 179.

cise of the will. So far then as our conscious life is concerned it is impossible to dissever sensations from volitions—they are joined in an indissoluble partnership. Hence we can never think of a thing without at the same time recalling in idea the relation which it bears to our active powers. I conceive a chair, for example, mainly as something which will support me if I rest my weight upon it, something which will stop me if I go against it. When a man fancies he sees a ghost but can summon up courage to *walk through* it, he knows there is nothing there. Matter means to us impeded movement, and we know what this *feels* like.

Let us proceed a step further. Making use of the previous illustration let us observe now that when we see, feel, or strike against any object, what happens in our internal economy is this—certain impressions, visual, tactile, and muscular, are registered in the brain, and remain there constituting our idea or memory of that object. And supposing the object be out of sight, but we call it to mind or *think* of it, we do, in fact, resuscitate those previous impressions, call them back to consciousness again (a mental process very aptly expressed by the term *recollection*), and this recall is nothing less than a faint revival of them. But how can this be known? We gather it must be so from the fact that the more intently a thing is thought of, the more we concentrate our thoughts upon it and picture it in the mind's eye, the more real does it appear; and let this power of imagination be pushed to excess, and the internal image may actually stand forth in objective prominence, as if there were really an object there before the organ of outward vision. We are familiar with this curious objectivizing tendency of intense thought in the annals of saintly men and women of old. Or to take

a common-place example, one hears, say, some tune which takes the fancy—the air keeps running in the head, and ever tends to be externalized in humming, singing, or whistling. Is it not reasonable to conclude that the self-same cerebral action is here in question—fainter while the tune remains a memory only, stronger when it was actually heard, or when it is actually reproduced. It must be within the individual experience of everyone that ideas tend, as the saying is, to *act themselves out*; and however preposterous a thing may be, long brooding over it will make it seem quite possible and reasonable.

Our brain is as a mirror which gives back to us—obliges us with—that which formerly presented itself to external perception. Memory yields to our inward vision, or *insight*, the copy of that which we have looked upon in nature as something alien to us, but which has now come to form part of the habitual furniture of our minds. A wonderful thing is memory,—the story of our past life writ in the secret chambers of the soul, as the frescoes around the tomb of some Egyptian king. And it were only necessary for the appropriate stimulus (whatever that may be) to be set in action—the right spring to be touched—to make the whole panorama start into life again; as the lightning, at night, flashes on the astonished sight all the familiar scene far and near—'twas all the time there, though forgotten and unseen.

It will be observed, in the above remarks, we have been speaking sometimes in terms of mental, sometimes in terms of cerebral action. In truth, we cannot do anything else. Just as we have no knowledge of actions apart from people doing them, so also we have no knowledge of thought except in connection with somebody's

brain. If a man have a delusion of sense it is all the same whether he is told it is his *brain* or his *mind* that is playing him false. If we see someone felled by a blow to the head and lying senseless on the ground, we naturally conclude it is the injury to his brain that has robbed him of sense and volition. Yet apart from these facts of practical experience there would seem to be no shadow of identity between a mass of fat and albumen (for such is our *brain*) and what we call our *mind*. Experience apart, there is no conceivable relation between the two ; it is, indeed, with difficulty we can conceive how any, even the lowest, degree of consciousness can be conjoined to matter and located in space.

Bearing in mind, then, this invariable association of facts mental and facts cerebral, it becomes a subject of interest to consider a little more particularly what the physical organ of mind is like.

The main mass of the human brain is fashioned around a central nucleus, which may be called the *sensorium*, inasmuch as this is the part engaged when the senses are called into play ; around and above this central part the great bulk of the brain spreads out, forming the dome-shaped *cerebral-hemispheres* — and this is the seat of consciousness ; it is by means of these cerebral-hemispheres, namely, that we *think*. Of what, then, are these important structures composed ? The brain substance is but a mass of fat and albumen, with some salts chiefly phosphatic, and endowed with the vital or nutritional energy which equally characterizes any and every portion of living or organized matter—how are these crude biological facts transmuted into the tablets of the mind ? How, indeed ! And vain were any attempt at explanation unless we adopt the method mentioned in an earlier paragraph—unless, that is to

say, we quit one domain of science to enter another. This solid body of organic structure must pale before our inward vision, and, in its place, a world of transcendental physics must appear—a world where everything is conceived as consisting of a mass of vibrations—before we can gain the faintest idea how an impression can be made upon the brain.

Now when we remember anything—a sight, a sound, the tone of voice in which a thing was said—it is plain that this has made an impression upon us, and (divesting the term of its metaphysical guise) we may affirm that a definite change has been thereby wrought in the nervous tissue of the brain, a change, probably, of molecular vibration—and this constitutes the organic basis or *substratum* for that perception or idea. We have seen that the particles of a piece of iron can be so influenced or impressed by electricity as to give to the whole the property known as magnetism—and what indeed seems more sensitive than the needle which “trembles to the pole”? But, keeping to our transcendental conception of matter, is it anything more wonderful that particles of brain tissue should be influenced by the impulse of vibrations travelling along the optic or the auditory nerve? Both cases indicate events of the same order. The incomprehensible thing is, of course, how certain changes in the molecular structure of matter should be accompanied by sentience and thought. The idea is not only incomprehensible—it seems positively ridiculous.

But the organic basis of memory—(to refer again, for a moment, to the biological fact)—is itself in a perpetual state of passage; like all living matter—fixed and solid though it may look. At each instant of time the delicate nerve cells of the brain are dying away and being

re-made. Our conscious life, and the continuity of our thought depends, moment by moment, on the hurrying tide of the blood—let the heart stop for a minute and all would come quickly to an end. So fares it also with that impression which has been stamped on the organ of the mind, that particular twist which has been imparted to certain molecular vibrations—this also is undergoing perpetual destruction and repair ; and if it remain there, it must be after the manner of the image which is mirrored in the running stream.

All motion, so experience teaches, comes at length to an end, however ; so that the molecules of the *substratum* in question tend ever to regain the original swing they had before the impression came to disturb them. Memory is fugitive ; mental impressions do not last like the imprint of a seal on wax ; they tend to slip away. Time wipes out the records of the mind. On the other hand it takes time to make them. Continued repetition is required to establish a thing in the memory. What is last learnt is soonest forgotten, just because the organic basis has not yet had time to form properly—as the old weather-proverb says—*Long foretold, long last, short notice, soon past.*

An idea of the formation of this organic basis may be gained if we consider the growth of habits or the acquirement of an art,—as, e.g., in playing a musical instrument or learning to speak a foreign tongue. The first requisite is, of course, that the whole attention be given to the task. At first it taxes all our powers to execute the right movements ; proficiency comes, however, by repetition, till, at last, that which took such trouble in the beginning can be done with the greatest ease, and without the least feeling of conscious effort. This means that the organic basis, the nervous me-

chanism, has been firmly established. Actions of this habitual character have made such well-beaten tracks for themselves that they need not await the bidding of the will—they can travel on their own account, thus leaving the attention free for other matters. And hence it comes about that those actions which are most remote from the surveillance of the will—which are most involuntary, in short—have the best-formed organic basis.

It is a matter of common remark that a man's thinking and doing (when not under special voluntary control) naturally runs in the grooves worn by habit. This is, indeed, only an instance of the general truth that force follows the path of least resistance—an animal at bay will try, in its efforts to escape, to find out which is the point of least resistance. There are many eventualities in the animal economy which might be given in illustration of this truth. It might be shown that functions which are most firmly embedded in organic structure will stand the storm of disease better than those capacities which are acquired later, and whose organization is therefore wanting in stability. In paralysis for instance, it might be shown that it is the muscles of the face, the arm, and the leg which are disabled, and not the more involuntary or automatic, those, namely, of the chest, back, and internal viscera. And of the paralyzed muscles it is just those which are the readiest servants of the will—the most voluntary—which suffer most: the delicate adjustments of the tongue in articulation, causing first indistinctness, and then at length complete loss of speech; the adaptation of thumb and forefinger in holding the needle or the pen; and when recovery takes place it is this power of fine muscular adjustment which is the last to be regained. Precisely the same

order of sequence may be observed to occur, again, in the convulsions of the epileptic seizure, for where it has been possible to watch the "march of the spasm," as it is called—(a most difficult thing to do, since it seems to run over the muscular frame with the rapidity of wild-fire)—it has been observed that the small mobile muscles of the hand, especially of the thumb and forefinger, are as a rule attacked before the muscles of the forearm, and the latter before those of the upper arm; and similarly in the lower extremity, the spasm is detected first in the small muscles of the foot; it begins here and then spreads up the leg.

A further reference to the phenomena of disease seems not altogether out of place in the present connection; for it might be supposed the correlation of mind and brain could easily be made out in this way. Where the mind is deranged—where its machinery is, so to speak, working askew or out of joint—it might be thought the physical organ of mind would suffer accordingly. But such is not the fact of the case. And indeed, on reflection, one sees this was hardly to be expected. For in what could perversion of the function of the organic substrata of ideas consist if not in *wrong ideas* and *errors of judgment*. Hence the difficulty of counteracting or dislodging these mistaken notions—it is like fighting a phantom. The *idées fixes* of the insane cannot be reached by the ordinary methods of medical treatment. A subtler art must be invoked to undo a mental twist which seems to lie deeper than the plane of action of even such thought-compelling and fancy-stirring drugs as opium and henbane. Moreover it is a circumstance well known to all connected with the treatment of the insane that there is more hope of recovery if there be also some disturbance of the general health, than in those cases

where the mind alone is affected. The rabid maniac who paces the padded room like a wild beast, or the hope-forsaken melancholic, whose physical condition presents a truly deplorable picture of broken health, is more likely to get well than the smart and intelligent-looking patient, who tells you with the most perfect self-composure that he is the prophet Elijah, or assures you that proceedings are on foot for his coronation as Emperor of all the Russias. Visions of distorted fancy may chase each other, in wildest confusion, across the canvas of the mind without there being anything structurally wrong with the brain—where it is but suffering along with other organs of the body in the course of a general illness. Or, again, if a person, otherwise in good health, happens to have a spectral illusion or hallucination of sense, it does not at all follow that there is something very much amiss with his brain.

This curious looseness of the tie which connects the mind with its physical organ is illustrated in the consequences observed to take place after the epileptic seizure. For whereas a severe attack of epilepsy—which is the occasion of a very grievous spectacle (the patient falling senseless to the ground in violent convulsions)—is followed by no mental symptoms of any importance, those slight cases, on the other hand, in which the outward symptoms are too trifling to attract notice—a vacant look perhaps, or a passing change of colour, which would escape any but the most practised eye—such apparently trifling attacks, we say, may be followed by very strange and aberrant manifestations of mental action. It seems better that the machinery of mind should for a time come to a dead stop (as is, in fact, the case in sound sleep) than that it should go on working askew ; for it is just in the milder class of cases referred to that the cha-

racter may be observed to change and the mind become permanently weakened.

It is, no doubt, true that where the mind has been affected for a number of years, some shrinkage and alteration of structure may be observed in the brain after death ; but there is nothing which could give the least clue as to what condition the person's mind had been in. And where death takes place at an earlier stage there is absolutely nothing, save a little congestion perhaps, to indicate that the organ was not that of a perfectly healthy and right-minded individual.\*

Nor is this, after all, anything else than we should be led to expect. If there be expression of character connected with any part of the bodily organism it is to be seen, surely, in the living face, not in the dead brain. Nature never intended a man's thoughts should be read by looking at his brain. It is not on this wise the secret chambers of the mind are to be inspected and explored. Trustworthy information concerning the bodily organism is, no doubt, often to be obtained by this means (since the brain is *not only* the *organ of mind*), but none whatever as regards character and mind. Now we have been careful to distinguish the real self, or ego, from the character ; how remote then does the "ego" seem from the gross elements of organic struc-

\* In the solitary instance in which unsoundness of mind occurs together with extensive structural disease of the brain—a disease known as "general paralysis of the insane"—the organ becomes in a very short space of time unequal to the simple vegetative functions of life, and death quickly terminates the painful scene. This is not to say, however, that there are no physical symptoms in insanity. Such may occur, and may reduce the sufferer to a truly pitiable condition ; but then, it is to be observed, these symptoms are confined to the general functions of the bodily frame (nutrition, assimilation, circulation, and the like)—they are, i.e., diagnostic of disease of the *lower*, not of the *higher*, centres of the brain : now it hardly needs to say that it is the higher centres, the higher executive of the brain, which constitutes, properly speaking, the *organ of the human mind*.

ture ! Yes, remote in essence, but not in space and time ; for the matter of that they are most closely allied.

And so, when the question of the correlation of mind and brain is broached, does it become necessary, as we have already pointed out, to adopt a conception of the latter which wholly transcends the ordinary canons of common-sense. It becomes evident that it is only upon an imaginary and transcendental plane that we can conceive any approach to the meeting of these two dissimilar things. Of physical force even—heat, light, motion and the like—we can form no adequate notion till we put off the habiliments of sense and set fancy's talisman to work. The solid earth, and all that it contains, then vanishes from view, its place being taken by the imaginary vibrations of an imaginary and inscrutable ether. And if it must needs be that we resort to this metaphysical *tour de main*, in order to convey to intelligence the only possible conception of the forces of external nature, what shall we say of the fluctuations of consciousness, of will, of conscience ? Attenuate matter as we may, pare it down till it appears at last but as a phase of the universal force of nature, the mystery still remains—how can certain changes in material things ever be accompanied by sentience and thought ; how can the “ego” be wedded to the “non-ego” ? It may be true, but we cannot tell how ; it passes comprehension.

### III.—MENTAL AUTOMATISM.

So much, then, concerning the physical *modus in quo* of feeling and thought in general. What is of more interest, however, in the present connection, is to trace this physical relationship in regard to particular

thoughts, particular doings and sayings, and to such an inquiry the previous remarks do indeed form the fitting prelude.

We have alluded to the fact that impressions may be stamped upon the organ of mind, that memories may be lying dormant, which the individual, nevertheless, knows nothing whatever about—experiences which do not seem in the least to concern him, and which indeed he cannot recall as his own, since there has been no effort of will expended in their making ; in other words, there is an *automatic* action of the mind.

Now this may be illustrated in the following way. If a pencil be held in the hand (the individual being seated with writing materials before him), it will sometimes happen that, without the least intention or conscious effort on his part, his hand begins to write of itself. For instance, one gentleman states as follows : “I make my mind as negative as possible, place myself in the attitude of writing, and in about two or three minutes I feel a sensation at the elbow as if a galvanic battery had touched it. The thrill continues down the forearm till it reaches the hand, which quickly doubles over towards the thumb, and then back, in strong tension, several times. When quiet it begins to write.”\* As in all experiments depending on the nervous system the results are, however, very variable. With some persons there is no result at all—let them try ever so long, the hand remains motionless. In others an involuntary tremor or jerking may be seen, with perhaps a few illegible scrawls ; while in others, again, characters are formed which can be deciphered. This is the singular phenomenon known as *graphic automaticity*.

\* *Proceedings of the (American) Society for Psychical Research.—Vol. I., No. 4, p. 557.*

*tism*, or automatic writing. But now comes the most curious thing about it, which is this,—that if legible characters be formed, the contents of such writing proves to be something quite foreign to the thought or intent of the writer. Indeed, so unaccountably strange has this seemed to those who have been witnesses thereof, that it has conveyed the idea of there being other agencies at work ; and the phenomena in question (it is hardly necessary to say) long formed an item in the *repertoire* of the spiritualists, being claimed by them as a strong point in proof of their theory of communication with the spirits of the departed.

Now, without denying that other agencies may be at work besides the person whose hand seems to display this peculiar cunning of its own, we venture to think scientific research has, once for all, placed the spiritualistic pretensions beyond the pale of credibility. For there is reason to believe that many odd and apparently unaccountable manifestations of psychic power are attributable either to the automatic action of a person's own mind (of which, however, he is profoundly unconscious), or to the mental influence of bystanders who, for the time being, happen to be *en rapport* with the individual in question.

This view receives support from the analogies of disease, inasmuch as quite a similar kind of mental automatism is sometimes observed where a person is suffering from a paralytic stroke, but still retains the partial use of his hand. If a patient in this condition be asked to put pencil to paper and write something "out of his head," as the expression is, he can often think of nothing else to write but so habitual, not to say automatic, a thing as his own name. And this he will do over and over again ; try as he may, he cannot,

for the life of him, think of anything else. The power of speech also may be affected in the following way ;—there may be, namely, a total inability to talk anything else but a senseless jargon ; or, again, it may be reduced to that most automatic kind of language—swearing. For an oath, be it observed, has no more intellectual value than an interjection or a cry ; it is, in fact, the *dernier ressort* of the person who has so far lost his self-composure that he cannot collect his thoughts—“ He knew not what to say, and therefore swore.”

Turning now to the phenomenon of automatic writing, we may observe a close parallel with the facts just mentioned.\* For where such writings are legible enough to be made out they are found to exhibit a remarkably low grade of mental power. What is written is often the veriest nonsense, forming sometimes the most laughable contrast to the *propria persona* of the writer. All who have had any experience of spiritualistic *séances*, and the like, are well aware that it is the silliness of the pretended messages which have thrown such discredit upon the “communications” from another world, and makes people justly incredulous. But the analogy is also further borne out by the decidedly low moral tone which occasionally crops up in these experiments. Persons making a trial of automatic writing

\* Compare the following account from a lady who tried the experiment with the planchette, which is simply an arrangement to facilitate the sliding of the hand on the paper. “ I have tried the planchette,” she writes, “ and I get writing certainly not done by my hand consciously ; but it is nonsense such as *Mebew*. I tried holding a pencil, and all I got was *mm* or *rererere* ; then for hours together I got this : *Celen, Celen*. Whether the first letter was C or L I could never make out. Then I got *I Celen*. I was disgusted, and took a book and read while I held the pencil. Then I got *Helen*. Now note this fact : I never make H like that (like I and C juxtaposed) ; I make it thus (like a printed H). I then saw that the thing I read as I Celen was Helen, my name.” (*Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, VIII., p. 37.)

have sometimes been greatly shocked and disconcerted by finding, as they say, that "Planchette begins to swear,"—a fact which, needless to say, the spiritualists have made capital of as indicating the presence of evil spirits.

In these phenomena we seem, then, to have evidence of an unusual and singular faculty—a sort of pseudo-personality, the partial emergence of which from the sub-conscious levels of mind appears to depend upon the enforced passivity or quiescence of the conscious will—and, by implication, of the real self or ego. Other facts may be adduced which illustrate, and in a still more striking manner, this curious state of mental automatism. But before proceeding to these, we may pause for a moment to trace the physical *modus in quo* of the phenomenon in question. In doing so we shall again draw upon the analogies of disease. *It is*, as the adage says, *an ill wind that blows nobody good*, and symptoms of disease—distressing as they are to the sufferer and all connected with him, may, nevertheless, be turned to account for the better understanding of the mental constitution of man.

Let it be observed, in the first place, that there are two ways in which we give verbal expression to our thoughts, namely, speech and writing; and as regards the latter, the right hand is, of course (and has been from time immemorial), used in preference to the left. Let it be remarked further that, owing to certain anatomical arrangements in the nervous system, paralysis of one side of the body is an indication that the opposite side of the *brain* is affected. Now in the large majority of cases of apoplexy it is the right side of the body which is paralyzed, and hence, from the fact just mentioned, we know that hemorrhage has occurred in the left side of

the brain. Moreover, since the faculty of speech generally suffers also, it is reasonable to conclude that the disease has invaded the centre or seat in the brain for the verbal expression of ideas. Putting these inferences and facts together—and inasmuch as talking and writing are acquired arts and come by education—we might say the left side (the left cerebral-hemisphere) is, in this respect at least, the best educated one, and that it takes the lead in those operations which belong to our voluntary and conscious life, leaving the other, or right half, for the more involuntary and automatic manifestations of mental action. If, then, there is reason to believe that the one side of the brain is habitually called into play during the exercise of our will and in the transactions of ordinary life—just as we use the right hand in preference to the left—it does not seem unreasonable to attribute the vagaries of mental automatism to the action of the less trained, less educated, or more automatic hemisphere of the brain.

IV.—CASES OF DIVIDED PERSONALITY.

To illustrate further this peculiar phenomenon of divided personality, it may be mentioned that after some severe injury to the brain, producing paralysis of the kind alluded to, an individual has been known to relapse from time to time into a state resembling the trance-like condition of somnambulism—completely oblivious of his actual surroundings, and living, to all intents and purposes, in a subjective world of his own. And the interesting point was that when one of these periodic interludes occurred, the individual was observed to fall into the selfsame train of thought, and pursue the iden-

tical course of action, which he was engaged in when the last one had come to an end ; the thread of the subconscious state of existence was perfectly distinct from the normal life-history ; it was broken and resumed again without prejudice to that other—and without the intermingling which happened at last with the unhappy Dr. Jekyll, of the famous Jekyll-Hyde tragedy.

Now such a state of mental cleavage may be compared with the case of the workman who mislays his tools in a drunken bout and cannot remember where he put them till he gets drunk again ; or with that kind of dreaming in which certain objects and scenes are recognized as recurring in dream life, and occurring only then ; or, again, with certain cases of injury to the head, where a man loses his senses, but on coming to himself again resumes the same line of action (even to finishing the very sentence which he was uttering when the accident happened)—like the old lady who, struck down at a card party, and restored to consciousness after long insensibility, surprises her weeping family by the inquiry, “What are trumps ?” But not to encumber the subject with tedious details, we will proceed now to quote certain cases of functional disturbance of the nervous system which display this strange alternation of psychical states in a very notable manner. In doing so we shall be anticipating a little, for the manifestations of the pseudo-self about to be described were obtained through the instrumentality of mesmerism—about which we shall have something to say in the next chapter.

The following is the case of a French girl, a patient of Professor Pierre Janet, under treatment for various functional disorders of the nervous system, of which hysteria was the chief. And it is to be further remarked that while mesmerism was the means of eliciting certain

facts of interest to psychical science, it was employed here as a method of cure, and with the best results.

Now it occurred to M. Janet to get the girl to write a letter while she was in the peculiar automatic condition of the mesmeric trance. This she did, and signed it with her name—"Louise." "But Louise was unconscious of the letter-writing, and when the epistle was shown to her she pronounced it a forgery. The unconscious hand was again bidden to write a letter; it wrote word for word the same letter as before, as if it were a musical box wound up to repeat a particular tune.

"By means of a simple artifice, however" (we are quoting the account of the case in the *Proceedings* of the English Psychical Society), "it was found possible to do more than this. M. Janet simply ordered the entranced girl to write answers to all questions of his after her awakening. The command thus given had a persistent effect, and while the awakened Louise continued to chatter as usual with other persons her unconscious self wrote brief and scrawling responses to M. Janet's questions. This was the moment at which in many cases a new and separate invading personality is assumed; and if Louise had believed in possession by devils—as so many similarly-constituted subjects in old times believed—we can hardly doubt that the energy now writing through her hand would have assumed the style and title of a 'familiar spirit.' Or if, again, she had been a modern spiritualist, it is probable that the signature of some deceased friend would have appeared at the foot of these communications. But here the 'communicating intelligence' was of so obviously *artificial* a kind that it could scarcely venture to pretend to be either a devil or Louise's grandmother. A singular conversation gave to this limited creation, this *statutory intelligence*, an

identity sufficient for practical convenience. ‘Do you hear me?’ asked Professor Janet. Answer (by writing), ‘No.’ ‘But in order to answer one must hear.’ ‘Certainly.’ ‘Then how do you manage?’ ‘I don’t know.’ ‘There must be somebody who hears me?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Who is it?’ ‘Not Louise.’ ‘Oh, someone else? Shall we call her Blanche?’ ‘Yes, Blanche.’ ‘Well, then, Blanche, do you hear me?’ ‘Yes.’ This name, however, had to be changed, for the following reason:—The name Blanche happened to have very disagreeable associations in Louise’s mind; and when Louise was shown the paper with the name Blanche which she had unconsciously written she was angry, and wanted to tear it up. Another name had to be chosen. ‘What name will you have?’ ‘No name.’ ‘You must—it will be more convénient.’ ‘Well, then, Adrienne.’”\*

This duality of character was curiously demonstrated, again, by means of the *suggestion* which a mesmerized person can be caused to follow out: “. . . then M. Janet clenched her left hand (she began at once to strike out), put a pencil in her right hand and said, ‘Adrienne, what are you doing?’ The left hand continued to strike, and the face to bear the look of rage, while the right hand wrote, ‘I am furious.’ ‘With whom?’ ‘With F.’ ‘Why?’ ‘I don’t know, but I am very angry.’ M. Janet then unclenched the subject’s left hand and put it gently to her lips. It began to ‘blow kisses,’ and the face smiled. ‘Adrienne, are you still angry?’ ‘No, that’s over.’ ‘And now?’ ‘Oh, I am happy!’ ‘And Louise?’ ‘She knows nothing, she is asleep.’”†

That mesmerism was effectual in this case, as a method of treatment, may be gathered from the follow-

\* *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, XI., pp. 239-40.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 243-4.

ing :—“ M. Janet accompanied his psychological inquiries with therapeutic suggestion ; telling Adrienne not only to go to sleep when he clapped his hands, or to answer his questions in writing, but to cease having headaches, to cease having convulsive attacks, to recover normal sensibility, and so on. Adrienne obeyed ; and even as she obeyed the rational command, her own Undine-like identity vanished away. The day came when M. Janet called on Adrienne—and Louise laughed, and asked him whom he was talking to. Louise was now a healthy young woman ; but Adrienne, who had risen out of unconsciousness, had sunk into unconsciousness again.” \*

But facts of a still more curious nature were elicited from another case under the care of the same physician. It must first be noted that the mesmeric trance is characterized by two stages—a lucid or alert stage, where a person is to all appearances quite as usual ; and, secondly, a state of profound lethargy, in which the individual looks as if he were in a deep sleep.

In the case now to be mentioned, M. Janet found that suggestions made to the patient, Madame B., while she was in the lethargic stage, were readily followed out as soon as this deeper stage was exchanged for the lighter and more lucid one ; whereas, if suggestions were made to her in the lucid stage there was no response at all, unless her *attention was occupied* by something else. Thus, when Madame B. was in the lucid stage—in which, as before said, the individual appears quite as usual—and while she was engaged in conversation with someone else, M. Janet says : “ Without interrupting her or addressing myself to her directly, I added, ‘ When I have clapped my hands five times you will rise and walk

\* *Ibid*, p. 245.

round the room.' I clapped my hands twice, and asked, 'Did you hear me?'—taking her hand and obliging her to listen. 'Why, you said nothing,' she replied, and turned away to talk to my friend. I clapped my hands again three times, and Madame B. got up automatically and walked round the room, without interrupting her conversation." \*

What, then, is the implication? Does it not look as if the suggestion were carried out by some duplicate self—a self which could be got at only on condition the individual was either in the deepest phase of the mesmeric trance, or if in the lighter phase, only when the conscious self (or all that was left of it in the mesmeric trance) was thrown off its guard, so to speak, by the attention being directed elsewhere?

That this was the true explanation may be gathered from the additional fact that Madame B. was susceptible of yet another phase of the mesmeric trance, which displayed a further dislocation of the mental mechanism, as the following extract will serve to show:—"The point at present interesting," says M. Janet, "is that I questioned her (Madame B.) one day in this new state as to the acts which she had just been accomplishing automatically in the lucid state which had preceded—acts of which the subject had never before, in any phase, manifested the least recollection. Now, however, she recited these acts with ease: 'You made me rise, you made me take up an engraving,' &c. And to this she added, '*The other one* was talking while I got up from my seat; she is so stupid that she knew nothing about it.' In short, this new phase had brought to light a new personality." †

\* *Ibid.*, p. 248.

† *Ibid.*, p. 249.

Here, then, there seemed to be *two* pseudo-selves besides the self of normal consciousness; the latter, it must be remembered, being all the while dormant, as regards, at any rate, that power of self-determination which we associate with the true personality of man. That Madame B. could engage in conversation is no disproof of this assertion; individuals in this, so-called, alert stage are alive to any kind of stimulus, and will talk as usual when spoken to—(what is wanting is the power of self-origination, the true insignia of the will)—but if not spoken to they will sit as still as any idol, not dreaming of taking the initiative in any shape or way.

Now this curious fission or cleavage of personality is, let us note in passing, not unlike what happens in those cases of pronounced mental derangement which come under the term *lunacy*; cases, that is to say, in which it is plain there is something seriously wrong with a man's normal powers of will and judgment. For instance: "We have the man who has always lost himself, and insists on looking for himself under the bed. We have the man who maintains there are two of him, and sends his plate a second time, remarking, 'I have had plenty, but the other fellow has not.' We have the man who maintains that he is himself and his brother too, and when asked how he can possibly be both at once, replies, 'Oh, by a different mother.'"

Once more, and finally, we will refer to another case of divided personality which presents features of unique interest, being, probably the most remarkable of the kind on record. The deranged state of health originated in a mental shock, in early childhood, in an individual—Louis V.—of extremely unsound constitution. The fright brought on an epileptic fit which was the beginning

of various nervous disorders, the most prominent of which was a paralysis of the right side of the kind known as hysterical or *functional*—and all this was accompanied by a marked deterioration in moral character. “The view of the doctors who have watched him” (we quote again from the report of the *Proceedings S.P.R.*) “is somewhat as follows:—A sudden shock falling on an unstable organization has effected in this boy a profounder severance between the functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain than has perhaps ever been observed before.”\*

Now it was found that a bar of steel placed on the patient’s right arm (the paralyzed one) caused the power of motion and sensation to be regained on that side, but the paralysis was now, strange to say, transferred, so to speak, to the other side—his left arm and leg then becoming numb and useless. “Inexplicable as such a phenomenon certainly is, it is sufficiently common (as French physicians hold) in hysterical cases to excite little surprise. What puzzled the doctors was the change of character which accompanied the change of sensibility. When Louis V. issued from the crisis of transfer, with its minute of anxious expression and panting breath, he was what might fairly be called a new man. The restless insolence, the savage impulsiveness have wholly disappeared. The patient is now gentle, respectful, and modest.”† And yet a further change is to be noted:—“If he is placed in an electric bath, or if a magnet be placed on his head, it looks, at first sight, as though a complete physical cure had been effected. All paralysis, all defect in sensibility, has disappeared. His movements are light and active, his expression gentle and timid. But ask him where

\* *Ibid.*, p. 499.

† *Ibid.*, p. 498.

he is, and you find that he has gone back to a boy of fourteen, that he is at St. Urbain, his first reformatory, and that his memory embraces his years of childhood, and stops short on the very day when he had the fright."\*

Here then we have the case of an individual who could be caused to assume three different characters, to live three different lives—not, be it observed, voluntarily or in make-believe fashion after the manner of the actor—but in reality, and as the necessary consequence of the faulty make of his bodily organization. The facts of the case were briefly this:—with paralysis of the right side the character changed for the worse, with paralysis on the left side it changed for the better, and when freed from his physical troubles the patient seemed to be transported to the days of childhood—memory was *put back*, so to speak, to a period of his life before the constitution had become so seriously deranged.

Now observe, the character changed for the worse when the right side of the body was paralyzed,—*i.e.*, when the *left* side of the *brain* was affected. And this is confirmatory of the view that the left cerebral-hemisphere is, in an especial manner, connected with that growth of education and discipline by which the brute nature of appetite and impulse is curbed and held in check. Can we resist the conclusion—supposing, that is to say, the above facts to be worthy of credence—that we have here the physical instrument of man's real self or ego.

The value of the above case in an evidential point of view is, indeed, unique. For, as before pointed out, those instances of disease in which changes in memory or moral character are generally to be observed (cases

\* *Ibid.* p. 499.

(*i.e.* of pronounced mental derangement) are characterized by physical symptoms which give no clue as regards the affection of the *organ of mind*—the brain being not by any means only the organ of mind, but the executive for the whole bodily frame as well.\* We have also pointed out that the *idées fixes* of the insane leave no trace upon the brain—and the same assertion may be made as regards the altering of the disposition which sometimes occurs in old age. Again, the mental automatism which excites our astonishment so in somnambulism, hypnotism, automatic writing, or even in dreams and drunkenness, gives no clue to cerebral localization. We know there is loss of control on the part of the higher centres of the brain—thus permitting a more automatic and animal-like display of thought and feeling, but there is nothing to show which cerebral-hemisphere is *hors de combat*. On the other hand, the bursting of a blood-vessel in the brain, or an injury to the head like a gun-shot wound, may, by bodily symptoms thereby accruing, proclaim pretty clearly what part of the brain is affected, and when under these circumstances peculiar mental symptoms show themselves, one is justified in drawing conclusions accordingly. In the above case, however, not only did the paralytic affection offer proof positive as regards the part of the brain involved, but since, owing to its functional character, it could be caused by artificial means to shift from one side of the body to the other, or to be altogether removed,—(a fact which implies the coincident transference or removal of the *affection of the brain*) since, moreover, the mental character could be observed changing *pari passu* with bodily symptoms,—not gradually as in senile decay, but almost at a moment's notice—

\* *Vide supra*, p. 91, footnote.

we have here a state of matters which throws a peculiarly interesting light on the mental and moral constitution of man.

And if it seem to any that the facts and inferences submitted above conspire to produce a truly deplorable, not to say repulsive, picture of poor humanity—that it throws into unpleasantly startling relief our utter dependence upon that “mass of fat and albumen” which we call our brain—it should be borne in mind that the case in question was that of an individual whose nervous system was so damaged by disease as to reduce him practically to the condition of a lunatic. The remarkable variations in character seemed to afford a momentary glimpse of the man’s real self or ego, as occurs sometimes in the “lucid intervals” of the insane—appearing, however, not like these, at random and haphazard, but summoned with all the definiteness and prearrangement of a set experiment. A glimmering of the remnant of the true self which had been spared by disease was undoubtedly to be discerned in that amelioration of character when the patient conducted himself with the decorum and *recollection* of a conscience-guided individual—for a brief moment the curtain of disease was lifted, decay was too far gone for anything more lasting. And if it be questioned whether a personality which can be changed from moment to moment by the shifting of a magnet, or the passing of a current of electricity, could be termed the real self or ego in any true sense of the word, this is only to call to mind the shifting and uncertain nature of the physical basis of life—for are we not, moment by moment, open to the invasion and assault of disease or accident? So long as due care is taken that traits of character are genuine and not feigned, there can be no doubt that where indications of the moral sentiments are forth-

coming, there the existence of the true self or ego may with confidence be affirmed. As is the tree, so is the fruit ; men do not "gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles."

V.—HYPNOTISM—CONCENTRATION OF MIND—SHOCK AND NERVOUS TENSION.

"WE have here a method of cerebral localization which, whether or not it gives anatomical indications, is, at least on the psychical side, self-acting and almost infallible. The suggestion once made to the hypnotized brain, the brain itself *picks out the centres* which it is desired to stimulate or inhibit." With these words we may preface a few remarks on the peculiar state of the mental mechanism known as *mesmerism*, or *hypnotism*.\*

Let us observe, in the first place, that the conditions for inducing the mesmeric trance are not at all unlike the conditions necessary for a frame of mind with which we are all very well acquainted—the habit of deep thought, to wit. "To stop and think," expresses the familiar truth that head-work and leg-work cannot well go on together, that there must be quiescence of the bodily frame if the mind is to be earnestly busied in thought. This is, indeed, only a part of nature's plan for limiting and cutting off the impressions of sense.

\* *Hypnotism* was the name coined by the surgeon Braid to designate the peculiar state of *nervous sleep* which he was so successful in causing in patients who had to undergo severe operations, and were by this means rendered unconscious of pain. The term is preferable to *mesmerism* (another name for the same thing), since the latter word is associated with certain theories held by Mesmer, for which there is no foundation. Since *mesmerism* is the more familiar name, however, it seems expedient to retain its use.

When buried in thought people may be seen to shade the eyes with the hand, and in this condition the eye always assumes that vacant or fixed look which is due to its being thrown out of focus. So natural is this inverse ratio between activity which is of the mind and activity which is of the body, that we take it for granted, and hardly notice the inconsistency of saying the eye is *fixed*—when it is in reality fixed on nothing at all, but staring blankly into space—for we do, in truth, infer an *inward* fixation from this appearance of outward vacancy. And so significant is the immobility of the eye when the mind is deeply engrossed in some train of thought that a good actor will be careful to attend to this matter when occasion demands—as, e.g. when it is intended to convey the idea of following with rapt attention the narration of an interlocutor. If, under these circumstances, the eye were allowed to wander and pass from one object to another, the attention would appear to be flagging and the desired effect be lost.

We are all familiar with nature's contrivances for cutting off sense-impressions in the process of going to sleep—now hypnotism is a kind of sleep, and if self-induced is only another name for that curious exaltation of function during sleep which is called somnambulism, or sleep-walking.

It is true, ordinary sleep—our constant and well-beloved attendant every night of our lives—is singular enough when one comes to think of it; but hypnotism is still more astonishing, inasmuch as it indicates that "profound change" in the nervous system (as Braid put it) which is known as *trance*. Now the most interesting feature in the mesmeric trance is that the hypnotized person or "subject" is in a peculiar way dominated by the will of another. We say *in a peculiar way*, because

we are all of us influenced, of course, by the wills of others. Suffice it to say for the present, however, that hypnotism may be described as resembling the ordinary action of one mind on another in those cases where a person of strong will and great decision of character gains the ascendancy over his fellows and compels compliance with his views. Such, indeed, is the *modus operandi* of all submission to authority—for authority is always at the opposite pole to free thought; and as sunshine falling on the fire in the grate tends to put it out, so does authority act to overawe, if not to cripple, the native force of private judgment.

Now it is something of this kind which happens in hypnotism. The "subject's" spontaneity of thought and deed seems to be extinguished by the influence of the mesmerist, for if he be not continually prompted by the latter to talk or to engage in activity of some kind, he will sit perfectly motionless, and without uttering a word rapidly lapses into a state of profound unconsciousness—out of which he can be roused by no one else but the operator.

In strongest contrast, however, to this curious kind of self-effacement is the extraordinary susceptibility displayed in regard to the personality and will of the mesmerist. It is as though the machinery of thought and action was, for the nonce, unhinged from its proper attachments, and linked on, instead, to the will of another. Memory and self-consciousness may remain—a mesmerized person may be quite aware of the absurd figure he is cutting when caused to go through some ludicrous performance, he may quite well remember it all when he is waked, but he cannot help doing it; he is for the time being possessed with certain incentives to action which, since they do not proceed from himself, he naturally

cannot account for ; he is, if we may so express it, the *passive spectator* of his own actions, yet they are not his, but another's ; it is his own apparatus of mind worked by somebody else. The mesmeric trance is, then, a remarkable sundering of the conscious will (and along with it the true self or ego) from its accustomed moorings. No discussion of the "ego" would be complete, therefore, without a reference to these phenomena.

We commenced by likening the hypnotic condition to the state of mind people are in when they are *buried in thought*. The observations of the last paragraph will serve to show that, certain analogies notwithstanding, there is still a broad difference. It is true, people may strangely forget themselves when they are lost in thought :—the Edinburgh professor who, on going to his class one day, turns round to take a pinch of snuff, and then forgets which way he was going, and finds himself at home again instead of at the university,—or the man who goes upstairs to dress for dinner, but mechanically takes off all his clothes and gets into bed, while his guests are waiting below, does undoubtedly show that he is "not all there." Yet it could not be said of such—as it can of a mesmerized person—that the citadel of self has been clean evacuated, leaving all the engines and stores at the mercy of another ; and that if it be not straightway occupied and put under a new command, all is speedily rapt in oblivion and darkness.

It may be contended, however, that the mind is subject to very different kinds of deep or sustained thought ; the mental application required for solving mathematical problems is something very different from the reveries of the poet, for instance. While the first is an example of mental activity with a very definite purpose in view and

kept well under control, the poet's play of fancy is far otherwise—instead of concentration there is here something apparently so different as to merit the term *expansion* or disengagement. It is, indeed, of the very essence of genius to mock at control, and to approach perilously near the boundaries of sanity and health. Flights of genius do, in truth, only take place through the partial effacement of the conscious will, with its accustomed paraphernalia of comparisons and judgments. A distinguished novelist once remarked that his characters, the creatures of his fancy, seemed sometimes to work themselves out automatically, and as if apart from the initiative of his will.

But to return. Let us note then that the strained immobility of the mesmeric trance is the outward phase of the most remarkable degree of inward fixation. If the "subject" be *en rapport* with the mesmerist he is certainly (in the deeper stages of the trance, at any rate) most completely *out of* relation in regard to everything else. His senses are locked up to one kind of stimulation, and to that alone—but to that they will respond with a swiftness and force of concentration surpassing anything known in the transactions of ordinary life. A mesmerized person will hear the faintest whisper of the mesmerist in a room crowded with a number of noisy people; for him all other sounds, save those emanating from this quarter, are as good as non-existent:—a striking proof, this, of the part attention may play in acts of perception.

Again, it is this power of concentrated and absorbed attention which lends such astonishing force to the suggestions of the hypnotizer. An idea originating in the one mind, and instilled, so to speak, into the other, seems to take root and fructify with all the undivided

mental energy of which the hypnotized organ is for the moment capable. Ideas thus implanted tend to act themselves out with the fatal force of a necessary law. It does not seem to occur to the "subject" that he has the least choice in the matter; and although he may evince the greatest reluctance to make a fool of himself by performing some absurd and unseemly exploit, his power of will seems completely abolished. The *wish* of volition may be there, but its *can* has been spirited away.

And, coupled with this absence of voluntary power, there is also that remarkable want of judgment which makes these performances so amusing—for let judgment be in abeyance, and everything will be taken on trust. A person in the mesmeric trance is thus transported into a state of child-like *naïveté*; he believes everything that is told him, however ridiculous. A peculiar sense of buoyancy, of "abandon," or freedom from restraint and care, is also experienced,—a mental posture resembling, as one might say, the *sans souci* and exuberance of youth.

But the most wonderful thing in it all is that, notwithstanding the rightful owner is deposed and a supplanter reigns in his stead, yet is this decapitated mechanism capable of an exaltation of function which may extend to the almost fabulous feats of clairvoyance. Will, judgment, eyesight, hearing, and every other sense may be annulled, yet an impressionability to certain stimuli may exist which seems nothing short of miraculous. The mesmeric trance might be entitled the triumph of automatism over reason and will. But in this it does not stand alone. The strange doings of the sleep-walker are of a kindred nature. There is the same abeyance of the conscious will, associated with the same sharpening of sense which transcends anything known

in our conscious moments,\* but the difference lies, of course, in the fact that in the one case the nervous mechanism is directed by the will of another person, whereas in somnambulism it is governed by what may be called the *lower executive*† of the individual himself.

The contrast between the performances of the higher and the lower executive is, indeed, very striking. Awake the sleep-walker at some critical juncture, recall the hesitating, blundering will at some moment of perilous balancing, and the individual will most certainly come to grief. For his actions are, for the time being, under the guidance of that exquisitely subtle and finely finished sense of instinct which is the main guide of animal life—which, e.g., enables a cat to accomplish the feat of walking all over the set dinner-table, on predatory thoughts intent, without upsetting a glass or displacing a single thing.

Now the great interest attaching to hypnotism lies (i.) in the marvellous concentration of attention, and (ii.) in the action of one mind upon another otherwise than through the ordinary channels of communication.

With regard to the first, we have contrasted the mental attitude of mathematician and poet with the remark that if there is concentration of mind in the one case, in the other there is something which might better be called *expansion*; and yet in both is the mind deeply and powerfully engaged. Let us observe, by the way,

\* Dr. Carpenter states in his *Mental Physiology* that he has known a hypnotized person find out, from a party of sixty persons, the owner of a glove by the sense of smell alone.

† By the *lower executive* is meant the functional exercise of those basilar portions of the brain which preside over sense and instinct; while in addition to this, the participation of that cerebral-hemisphere, which we have described as being the most automatic, and therefore less subservient to the conscious “ego,” is in all probability involved in all those manifestations of pseudo-personality which form the subject of this and the preceding chapter.

that both these states of mind may be witnessed in the effects of a religious revival—regarded from a psychical point of view. While the heart is bowed under a sense of sin, the thoughts are fixed upon the objects of religious meditation, and the whole stream of nervous energy is thrown in this one direction. Let this phase be passed, or (to use the language of the mathematician), let the problem be solved, and a frame of mind may now ensue which exhibits the very reverse character; there is a rebound in the opposite direction, as it were,—instead of concentration there is expansion. The settlement of religious belief acts now as an automatic fixation, forming the basis from which the emancipated soul may "launch out with a divine carelessness" in all the buoyancy which faith is fitted to bestow. How much might be said on the power and the perils of faith!

But there is, in truth, an *automatic fixation* in any case—it is a fact of widest significance in the economy of man. Consider, for instance, the movements of the bodily frame:—in walking, there is the automatic steady-ing of the one leg in order that the other foot shall be brought forward in advance; in working at any handicraft, there is the steady-ing of the object by the left hand in order that we may bring the right to bear upon it; while in the simple operation of threading a needle, the peculiar trick of *pursing the lips* betrays the tension into which the muscular frame is thrown in the execution of anything requiring great nicety of action:—the way must be "made straight" in order that the wheels of voluntary action shall run smoothly.

As with muscles, so also with mind—there may equally be a state of tension. The tension of profound study means that fixed attitude of will in which the mind is kept on the alert, and is, perhaps, almost preternatur-

ally clear, while the whole available tide of thought is summoned to play upon the topic in hand. The poet's selfless mood of passive contemplation, when "Nature herself seems to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power," approximates again the trance of the religious devotee—a state of *expectant attention*, in which the bonds of earth seem loosed, beatific visions of the fancy pass before the inward gaze, and the objects of thought may be so powerfully realized as actually to produce the bleeding *stigmata* on the cutaneous surface; while in hypnotism this spell-bound attitude of mind has gone so far as to reduce the human being to the condition of a nervous automaton, which responds to the suggestions of the operator with all the directness and unerring force of instinct.

This remarkable faculty of directing the full stream of the *vis nervosa* to some desired end is that which gives hypnotism its practical value as a therapeutic agent. It is a grand principle in military tactics to bring your whole available strength to bear upon the desired point—it was so that Napoleon won his battles. And if the nature of hypnotism has been understood, it will be manifest that suggestions might be made to a mesmerized person—ideas might be instilled into his mind—for the express purpose of counteracting or dislodging the mischievous tendency of some morbid habit or point of view, and by which means such an individual might be induced, so to say, to effect his own cure—"the suggestion once made to the hypnotized brain, the brain itself picks out the centres which it is desired to stimulate or inhibit."

That much can be done by a judicious use of authority in stimulating and directing the natural forces of the

system—and that, too, short of anything like hypnotic agency—is a well known fact with all who are engaged in sanatory or educational work. The annals of human error and caprice give melancholy proof that it is often-times a man's own will which stands in the way of his best interests ; and well would it be if, for a return to sanity and health, the depraved will could be removed, regenerated, and restored.

Now we are not romancing, but keeping strictly to the sober truth, when we affirm that this has actually been brought to pass in real life ;—and of this an instance or two has been given in the previous chapter. Although capable also of exercising a powerful influence on the bodily frame, mesmerism is obviously, and properly speaking, a phenomenon of mental or psychical action—a display of force on the psychical plane. And hence it is not surprising to find it is chiefly in cases of functional disorder of the nervous system,—cases where disease has touched the very citadel of man's being, his power of volition and self-control, his real self or ego,—it is just in this class of cases that mesmerism has been found of value as a method of cure. We have referred to the hopeless nature of certain forms of insanity, the powerlessness of the ordinary methods of treatment to reach some fatal bias of ideation, to undo some morbid tangle of the mind. You cannot reason a lunatic out of his delusion, for his madness just consists in his being no longer open to the ordinary influences of moral suasion. Alter the character of the blood or nervous tissue as you may, the delusion still remains “fixed” in an abnormal twist of those subtle vibrations which form the physical basis of thought. But this, as we had occasion to point out on a previous page, is transcendentalism. Presumably, then, the difficulty

might be met by a method which transcends the tenor of the ordinary operations of human life—and such is hypnotism.\*

Before passing now to the second point of interest,—how it is, namely, that one mind can act upon another otherwise than in the customary way—there remains something to be said concerning the induction of the mesmeric trance, as regards the organism in which it takes place, and not considering, for the present, the agency of any second person. For this latter proviso is not always necessary—that is to say, people can mesmerize themselves; moreover animals may be hypnotized by purely physical means and with no mental influence *ab extra*.

Now it is a fact pretty generally known that if a shock can cause disease, or even death, a shock may also be instrumental in effecting a cure. A gentleman once felt a severe attack of rheumatic fever coming on, and being away from home determined to set out with all despatch on the return journey. On the way he met with an alarming railway accident, and arriving at his destination was astonished to find all traces of his rheumatism gone—the shock had cured him. “ Whenever,” says Braid (the celebrated Manchester surgeon who practised hypnotism as an anaesthetic), “ whenever I observe the breathing very much oppressed, the face greatly flushed, the rigidity excessive, or the action of the heart quick and tumultuous, I instantly arouse the patient, which I have always readily and speedily succeeded in doing by a clap of the hands, an abrupt shock on the arm or leg by striking them sharply with the

\* For cases in corroboration of this contention see *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*, 1884, Vol. ii., p. 289 sqq., and 1886, Sept., p. 238; also *Contribution à l'étude de l'hypnotisme*, par le Dr. Dufour.

flat hand, pressure and friction over the eyelids, and by a current of air wafted against the face." \*

But shock is only another word for a profound impression on the nerves—it means, *i.e.*, a sudden change or rearrangement in the molecular vibrations of nervous tissue. The shock which puts an end to the mesmeric trance causes a rapid return of the nervous mechanism to its wonted lines of action ;—just as, by way of example, a waterspout may be broken by the concussion of air caused on firing a gun, the water then resuming its customary level. Now what had induced the nervous energy to abandon its ordinary way of action—in other words, how is the mesmeric trance produced ?

If an organ of sense be over-stimulated, as in riveting the gaze on some glittering object till the eye is dazed, the mind sinks, if the experiment be long continued, into a state of semi-unconsciousness, and a condition of the nervous system is now at hand in which the phenomena of hypnotism may be called forth.† We may conclude then that these curious phenomena are due to a derangement or loss of equilibrium in the nervous mechanism, brought about by the over-stimulation and subsequent exhaustion of some one part of it—the ordinary tenor, tension, or *Zusammenhang* of the nervous system having thereby undergone a remarkable alteration.

In explication of this peculiar condition, a few further remarks may be hazarded in this place, perhaps, on the general subject of shock and mental tension.

\* Braid, on *Hypnotism, or Nervous Sleep*, 1843, p. 52.

† Crystal-vision and mirror-gazing is a time-honoured practice with the Fakirs or Seers of the East, the mind being by such means so detached from the current of normal life as to plunge the individual into a state of clairvoyant prescience, imparting apparently magical powers and producing an inward visualization, due doubtless to the liberated action of the pseudo or sub-conscious self.

The possibly injurious effects of a shock—such as a sudden “turn,” or fright, is familiar enough ; and without going the length of positive injury, fear always tends to blanch the cheek and paralyze the limbs. What is known as “brain paralysis”—an ailment which creeps on gradually as the result of prolonged anxiety or worry—is essentially similar to the effect of fright (anxiety has indeed been described as *fright spread out thin*), the difference involved being that of a sudden assault and a more protracted siege. Little children (with their naturally unstable constitution) have not unfrequently been thrown into that state of nervous twitching called “St. Vitus’ dance” through a sudden fright—even an epileptic fit may be brought on, as was the case with Louis V. (see p. 103). When hunted animals appear to be *shamming dead* they are, in all probability, paralyzed by fear.\* If you take up some small animal in the hand, how still it keeps, although it must be in a state of mortal terror. All violent emotions upset the ordinary tenor of life. People tremble with excitement, and indeed any kind of feeling—be it anger, fear, or joy—if it be only profound enough, will thus agitate the frame.† Now trembling is but an incipient form of paralysis (as the peculiar *creepy* sensation accompanying deep feeling

\* “The motionlessness of wild game in the field when danger is near is well known, and every hunter is aware of the difficulty of seeing even the largest animals, though they are just standing in front of him. The tiger, whose stripes are obviously meant to imitate the reeds of the jungle in which it lurks, is nowhere found in Africa ; but its beautiful cousin, the leopard, abounds in these forests, and its spotted pelt probably conveys the same sense of indistinctness as in the case of the zebra.”—Drummond’s *Tropical Africa*, p. 167.

† “I remember,” says Darwin, “once seeing a boy who had just shot his first snipe on the wing, and his hands trembled to such a degree from delight that he could not for some time reload his gun.”—*Expression of the Emotions*, 1872, p. 67.

is, again, but the incipient stage of trembling). After the ecstasy of the conjugal act some animals lie in a state of complete torpor ; and we have it on the authority of the writer of that charming volume, *Insect Variety*, that insects will pause and remain motionless on the leaf so long as a cloud obscures the sun, and butterflies are observed to search for a partner, "and then pair at noon tide when the sky is overcast, love here acknowledging a kindred stimulus to fear and anger."\*

It is, then, of the very essence of shock to displace the conscious self from its wonted pedestal of command—the executive of the organism devolving then upon those deputy powers of its own automatic machinery in the way previously described.

In the shock of battle the soldier is insensible of his wounds ; the appalling nature of the situation has paralyzed the reasoning and reflective powers ; he is for the time being an automaton, and this selfless mood gives him his best chance to thrust and parry with success. In deeds of heroism, and in the agony of martyrdom, the same obliteration of self-consciousness is seen—self belongs no longer to self : it has been surrendered in allegiance to some object of sovereign regard, which fills and dominates the field of emotion. The mental tension (or in other words the strained *attention*) with which the great preacher or the great actor is followed, witnesses to the profound impression he is creating. Now all such situations are, in truth, comparable to the condition seen in the mesmeric trance, a condition in which the insensibility to pain—permitting all manner of violence to be done to the frame without the least sign of flinching—is, as we have already pointed out, in such striking contrast to the acute sensibility manifested in

\* *Insect Variety*, by A. H. Swinton, p. 92.

regard to the one quarter, to which the whole stream of nervous energy sets—as the needle points to the pole.

From considerations such as these we may learn the reciprocal relation of *shock* and *tension*. They are indeed mutually antagonistic, as may be gathered from the way in which the teeth are clenched, the breath held, and the whole frame “strung” in order the better to endure the shock of some cutting operation. Or we may describe a shock as the sudden changing (as the paralysis brought about by the strained fixation of the eye implies a *gradual* changing) of the tension of natural and healthy, into the tension of abnormal, nervous action—for tension of some kind there must always be, wherever vital energy, or indeed force of any description, is concerned. The whole may consequently be summarized as a question of different kinds of tension :—where the will is in abeyance, where *i.e.* the higher executive of the brain is *hors de combat*, the automatic kind of energy, with the curious fixation, or absorbed attention, peculiar thereto, may then be disengaged, but let the conscious will resume its sway and this morbose kind of tension comes to an end, the nervous mechanism then falling back upon its accustomed lines of action.

Now since the phenomena of hypnotism are forthcoming when the ordinary procedure of mentation is more or less impaired, and only then, it is not surprising to find that hypnotism numbers its best “subjects” among people who are constitutionally nervous, oversensitive, and easily upset. The slightest shock may suffice to throw such highly susceptible individuals into the cataleptic or mesmeric condition, and, as before said, a shock will bring them out of it.

But is it not (someone might here very naturally ask)

a very questionable thing to cause further unsettlement in systems already so seriously deranged? Well, it would, no doubt, be so, if there was nothing to be gained by it. But then it must not be forgotten that states of disease are very different from states of health. Sometimes where people have been induced to try *automatic writing*, for sake of experiment, or to play the so-called "willing game," just for the fun of it, a tendency has been observed to fall into a state resembling the hypnotic trance—and should this happen such practices should certainly be discontinued. But where the mental constitution is already seriously out of order, that is quite another matter, and must be judged accordingly. What is a blessing to the sick and ailing may be an inconvenience, if not a positive injury, to the hale and strong—drugs are poison, and crutches would be an encumbrance, to the vigorous frame.

VI.—THOUGHT-READING—THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE—PHANTASMS.

IN passing now from a consideration of what happens at the *receiving-terminus* of the hypnotic *rappoport*, to inquire into the nature of that which happens at the *transmitting-terminus*, we are approaching a question of still deeper interest.

The soothing effect of fondling, patting, stroking, and indeed of all kinds of gentle stimulation of a rhythmical or monotonous kind, is well known. The curious art of charming serpents, or the familiar custom of hushing the infant to sleep, testifies to the like soporific effect of sound or music. But granting that *rubblings*, *pressures*, and *passes* are all methods which have been found of use in inducing the mesmeric trance, the fact remains that if one individual will set himself to mesmerize

another the prime requisite is that he shall exercise an *effort of the will*.\* In default of this, and, generally speaking, without also a certain amount of concurrence on the part of the "subject," at any rate on a first trial, no merely physical agency will be of avail. And, further, supposing now the hypnotic *rappoport* once set up, it is found that the influence can be conveyed from one individual to the other independent of the ordinary means of communication. Now this is the astonishing thing. That one will should be subject to another, that we all do in fact exercise an influence on those with whom we come in contact, is nothing strange; the marvel is that a thought can be transmitted from mind to mind "without speech, or word written, or sign made"—that there can be community of sentiment in the absence of any bond or nexus known to physical law. The discussion here resolves itself therefore into the wider consideration of this peculiar *transference* of thought, or, to put it in more general terms (for, as we shall see, it is a phenomenon which is not confined to the mesmeric trance), the consideration of certain occurrences in mental life which are not traceable to the ordinary modes of causation.

Most people have heard of the silent action of one mind upon another, occurring generally when persons are united in closest sympathy. The phenomena of *thought-reading* are also familiar, and the so-called "willing-game" has in some places been cultivated with considerable ardour. Exciting scenes were sometimes

\* "The Rev. C. H. Townshend made this observation in an experiment with the celebrated naturalist, Agassiz, whom he was mesmerizing while himself distracted by the non-arrival of some expected letters. 'Although I was at the time engaged in the mesmeric process to all appearance as actively as usual, my patient called out to me constantly and coincidently with the remission of my thought, "You influence me no longer, you are not exerting yourself."'"—*Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii., p. 88.

witnessed on the advent of some professional "thought-reader." A gentleman in dress clothes, but bare-headed, and in a state of great physical excitement, not to say distress, might occasionally be seen rushing along the open street, and even entering strange houses, dragging along with him the astonished "willer," and followed by a rabble of eager wonder-seekers. This was the professional thought-reader in the exercise of his calling. A further discovery was made, however, for it was found that the transference of thought could take place without any bodily contact at all. This was then the true *thought*-reading, while the other might more appropriately be called *muscle*-reading; for the willing-game had brought to light the curious fact that "muscular hints so slight as to be quite unconsciously given could be equally unconsciously taken."

Thought-reading experiments may be conducted as follows:—The "agent" thinks intently of something with the desire that the same mental image shall arise in the mind of the "percipient," who sits some little way off, blindfolded, that his thoughts should not wander, and with pencil in hand ready to put on paper that which may present itself to his inward vision. Professor Oliver J. Lodge, who conducted a number of such experiments with infinite care and trouble, reports as follows: "With regard to the feelings of the percipients when receiving an impression, they seem to have some sort of consciousness of the action of other minds on them; and once or twice when not so conscious have complained that there seemed to be 'no power' or anything acting, and that they not only received no impression, but did not feel as if they were going to.

"I asked one of them what she felt when impressions were coming freely, and she said she felt a sort of influ-

ence or thrill. They say that several objects appear to them sometimes, but that one among them persistently recurs, and they have a feeling when they fix upon one that it is the right one." \*

The term thought-*reading* seems especially applicable to an instance like the following, narrated by Mr. G. A. Smith, of No. 2, Elms Road, Dulwich :—" One evening in September, 1882, at Brighton, I was trying some experiments with a Mrs. W., a 'subject' whom I had frequently hypnotized. I found that she could give surprisingly minute descriptions of spots which she knew, with details which her normal recollection could never have furnished. I did not for a moment regard these descriptions as implying anything more than intensified memory, but resolved to see what would happen when she was requested to examine a place where she had *never been to*. I therefore requested her to look into the manager's room at the Aquarium and to tell me all about it. Much to my surprise she immediately began to describe the apartment with great exactness, and in perfect conformity with my own knowledge of it. I was fairly astonished, but it occurred to me that although my subject's memory could not be at work, my own mind might be acting on hers. To test this, I imagined strongly that I saw a large open umbrella on the table, and in a minute or so the lady said, in great wonder, ' Well ! how odd, there's a large open umbrella on the table,' and then began to laugh." † Another gentleman, Mr. F. Corder, of 46, Charlwood Street, S.W., who was for some time in the habit of mesmerizing his wife for her health, says : " She gave me repeated proofs

\* Report of Professor O. J. Lodge, published in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. ii., p. 189.

† *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., p. 96.

that she was able to ransack my mind and memory far better than I myself could, but this was when desired to do so."

The above are illustrations then of the action of one mind upon another—the transmission of an image from one brain to another without the intervention of the ordinary means of communication.

Of this abnormal power of expression or projection of thought and will, there are, however, still more remarkable cases on record. "One gentleman known to the Committee" (we are quoting from a report of the Society for Psychical Research) "appears on a few occasions to have voluntarily caused an apparition of himself to certain persons. We understand that he can only rarely produce this phenomenon, and cannot always recognize in himself the conditions under which he will be able to do it; still he can to some extent foresee the possibility and arrange test conditions. Unfortunately he is usually asleep when the apparition occurs, and is unable to remember or describe his part in the phenomenon; but on one occasion there seems to have been some consciousness on his part." Another account runs as follows:—"One evening early in 1878 A. resolved to try and appear to B. at some miles distant. A. did not inform B. beforehand of the intended experiment, but retired to rest shortly before midnight with thoughts intently concentrated on B., with whose room and surroundings, however, A. was quite unacquainted. A. soon fell asleep and awoke next morning unconscious of anything having taken place. On seeing B. a few days afterwards, A. inquired, 'Did anything happen at your rooms on Saturday night?' 'Yes,' replied B., 'a great deal happened. I had been sitting over the fire with M. smoking and chatting. About 12.30 he rose to leave

and I let him out myself. I returned to the fire to finish my pipe when I saw you sitting in the chair just vacated by M. I looked intently at you, and then took up a newspaper to assure myself I was not dreaming, but on laying it down I saw you still there. While I gazed without speaking you faded away. Though I imagined you must be fast asleep in bed at that hour, yet you appeared dressed in your ordinary garments, such as you wear every day.' 'Then my experiment seems to have succeeded,' said A. 'The next time I come, ask me what I want, as I had fixed in my mind certain questions I intended to ask you, but I was probably waiting for an invitation to speak.'

"A few weeks later the experiment was repeated with equal success, A., as before, not informing B. when it was made. On this occasion B. not only questioned A. on a subject, which was at that time under very warm discussion between them, but detained A. by the exercise of his will some time after A. had intimated a desire to leave. This fact when it came to be communicated to A. seemed to account for the violent and somewhat peculiar headache which marked the morning following the experiment . . . ." The Committee add that these experiments had to be discontinued, as they were believed to be injurious to health.

The case we shall next quote presents an additional marvel, inasmuch as the apparition was reciprocal, i.e. not only was the mind of the "percipient" impressed or influenced so as to cause an hallucination of the bodily presence of the "agent," but the latter was able to imagine himself translated to the distant scene of his thoughts. This was not managed however without the aid of hypnotism, and repeated efforts of will were necessary before the attempt succeeded. The case is

therefore remarkable in every way, there being sufficient power of volition retained in the mesmeric trance to command the phenomena in question, showing a coöperation of the conscious will with the peculiar liberation of psychic energy which we have described as characteristic of the hypnotic condition. After describing the mode of mesmerizing, the agent proceeds: "About six months ago I tried my power of will in order while under the (hypnotic) influence to see persons to whom I was strongly attached. For some time I was entirely unsuccessful, although I once thought I saw my brother (who is in Australia), but had no opportunity of verifying the vision. A short time ago, I tried to see a young lady whom I know very well, and was perfectly surprised at my success. I could see her as plainly as I can see now, but I could not make myself seen by her, although I often tried to." After repeated trials this extraordinary feat was also accomplished. The account is as follows:—"I lay on my bed, with my head raised on two pillows, and Sparks (the mesmerizer) sat facing me about three feet off on a chair. The lights were made low, and then I watched his eyes intently, thinking in the meantime of the young lady whom I wanted to see. After a short time (about seven minutes) my sense of hearing left me, and I could see nothing but two eyes, which after a short time disappeared, and I then became senseless. (When we first experimented I could never get farther than this state, and it was only after repeatedly trying that I did so.) I then seemed to see (indistinctly at first) her face, which gradually became plainer and plainer, until I seemed to be in another room altogether, and could detail minutely all the surroundings. I told Sparks, when I came round, what I saw, who was with the young lady, and what

she was doing, all of which were verified in her letter." \*

The letter referred to contained the following passage :—" Last Tuesday I was sitting in the dining room reading, when I happened to look up, and could have declared I saw you standing at the door looking at me. I put my handkerchief to my eyes, and when I looked again you were gone. I thought it must have been only my fancy, but last night (Monday) while I was at supper I saw you again just as before, and was so frightened that I nearly fainted."

Now a phantom of sense, or an apparition, although extremely odd, and therefore very disconcerting, in the daytime, is a very familiar thing at night, for it is of such stuff our dreams are made. The marvel lies, not so much in the fact of the vision or apparition, as in the possibility of such a thing being producible *at will*, and not happening, like our dreams, fortuitously and without meaning or design.

With the examples just given we may compare the following instances of phantasmal appearance, or as it might be called the projection of the "double." A lady writes :—" When about nine or ten years old I was sent to a school at Dorchester as a day boarder; it was here my first curious experience occurred that I can clearly remember. I was in an upper room in the school, standing with some others, in a class opposite our teacher, Miss Mary Lock; suddenly I found myself by her side, and looking towards the class saw myself distinctly—a slim pale girl, in a white frock and pinafore. I felt a strong anxiety to get back, as it were, but it seemed a violent and painful effort, almost struggle,

\* *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii., pp. 672-3.

when accomplished. I was much frightened, but did not mention it till many years after." \*

Another lady gives a similar experience:—"In the autumn of 1863 I was living with my husband and first baby, a child of eight months, in a lone house, called Sibberton, near Wansford, Northamptonshire, which in bygone days had been a church. As the weather became more wintry a married cousin and her husband came on a visit. One night, when we were having supper, an apparition stood at the end of the sideboard. We four sat at the dining-table, and yet, with great inconsistency, I stood as this ghostly visitor again, in a spotted, light muslin summer dress, and without any terrible peculiarities of air or manner. We all four saw it, my husband having attracted our attention to it saying, 'It is Sarah,' in a tone of recognition, meaning me. It at once disappeared. None of us felt any fear, it seemed so natural and familiar. The apparition seemed utterly apart from myself and my feelings, as a picture or statue." †

Lastly we may refer, in this connection, to those singular occurrences which are commonly classed under the phenomena of "second sight,"—curious freaks of nature, which would hardly merit serious attention if they were not so well authenticated. These generally take the form of premonitions or *warnings*—sometimes confined to an ill-defined feeling which cannot be accounted for, at other times assuming the proportions of a vision or other hallucination of sense—by which intimation is conveyed of some untoward or critical event which befalls an absent friend or relative. A large number of carefully sifted cases has been collected by the Society

\* *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii., p. 58.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 217.

for Psychical Research and published in *Phantasms of the Living*. From these we may select the two following. The first is from the Rev. Canon Warburton, who states as follows : “ Somewhere about the year 1848 I went up from Oxford to stay a day or two with my brother, Acton Warburton, then a barrister, living at 10, Fish Street, Lincoln’s Inn. When I got to his chambers, I found a note on the table apologizing for his absence, and saying that he had gone to a dance somewhere in the West End, and intended to be home soon after 1 o’clock. Instead of going to bed, I dozed in an arm-chair, but started up wide awake exactly at one, ejaculating, ‘ By Jove ! he’s down ! ’ and seeing him coming out of a drawing room into a brightly illuminated landing, catching his foot in the edge of the top stair, and falling headlong, just saving himself by his elbows and hands. (The house was one which I had never seen, nor did I know where it was.) Thinking very little of the matter I fell a-dose again for half an hour, and was awakened by my brother suddenly coming in and saying, ‘ Oh, there you are ! I have just had as narrow escape of breaking my neck as I ever had in my life. Coming out of the ball room, I caught my foot, and tumbled full length down the stairs.’ ” \*

The next case is that of a lady who was staying, at the time, at a foreign spa for her health. One day after bathing and while resting on the sofa reading, she says, “ A slight drowsiness came over me and I distinctly saw the following :—My husband, who was then in England, appeared to me riding down the lane leading to my father’s house. Suddenly the horse grew restive, then plunged and kicked, and finally unseated his rider, throwing him violently to the ground. I jumped up

\* *Ibid*, vol. ii. p. 338.

hastily, thinking I had been asleep ; and on my going down to luncheon I related to a lady who was seated next to me what I had seen, and made the remark, 'I hope all is well at home.' My friend seeing I was anxious, laughed and told me not to be superstitious, and so I forgot the incident, until two days afterwards I received a letter from home saying my husband had been thrown from his horse and had dislocated his shoulder. The time and place of the accident exactly agreeing with my vision." \*

VII.—CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF THE ABOVE ABNORMAL MENTAL STATES  
—THEIR AFFINITY TO SLEEP, INSANITY, AND DREAMING.

Now it is not unlikely that a review of these anomalous displays of psychic power should give rise to a somewhat uneasy train of thought. For are not such occurrences, it may be asked, subversive of the ordinary tests of judgment by which we are led to distinguish fact from fancy, and does not the consideration of what may seem such questionable truths tend to unsettle views and principles upon which the very integrity of our conscious life is based ?

To say that these marvels are not magic or romance, are neither fraud nor fable, but are stamped with the credentials of modern scientific research, may scarcely be reassuring, for the current feeling will probably be that such things should *not* be verified as matters of fact, but should be relegated to the place where they may be thought most properly to belong—the limbo of fairyland and fancy.

\* *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 339.

This feeling of concern is natural enough—the uncanny is always disquieting—and we do not deny that in investigations of this kind we are treading slippery paths. We venture to think, however, where due care is exercised to keep broad principles of nature steadily in view, no great difficulty ought to be experienced in distinguishing the sober and familiar truths concerning man's real self or ego from those evanescent phantasmagorical appearances which would seem to draw the very breath of their existence from the incapacity or decay of that other. Why, for instance, did Adrienne, the curious co-partner of personality, sink again, Undine-like, into the oblivion from which she had sprung if it were not that she was not the genuine personality of the girl Louise—as the spectres of delirium or sleep fade and vanish away when the norm of health and waking-life is regained?

Those singular cases of divided personality or mental cleavage (curious cataclysms in the personal history of the individual) may well be regarded as a *lusus* or freak—and where brought on by illness, as a most serious fault and failure—on the part of nature; in the latter instance not a whit less so than some unsightly malformation of the bodily frame. The fact is, all examples of mental automatism, however they may differ in the public estimate, do, nevertheless, bear a family-likeness to that which we have called the eclipse of the “ego”; they are of the same kindred as insanity, and that this is a condition in which nature's ideal has suffered signal failure goes, of course, without saying.\*

\* The extraordinary feats of memory performed by some imbeciles, the marvellous displays of craft and cunning exhibited by others, is as much an indication of the over-activity of lower, at the expense of higher centres in the brain, as the tendency (so common in this class of demented and so curiously suggestive of the habits of the monkey and the magpie) to

And yet it is also most true that a mental cataclysm befalls the human economy, at certain periods, even in the fullest measure of sanity and health. As man is swept once in every twenty-four hours into the earth's shadow the mental mechanism falls to pieces, as it were, to be made up again over night. As each atom of the brain is, in the exercise of its functions, ever trembling on the verge of annihilation, so is it also with the machinery of thought as a whole. The seeds of disruption are ingrained in its very structure, and if it be not thus, from time to time, thrown into a state of unhingement,—if sleep do not come to steal away the senses and the will,—the health is sure to suffer, so that this nightly abnormality is the very condition of a continued state of sanity and health;—'tis a strange and motley crew that mans the bark of life!

In sound sleep the rightful proprietor of the human apparatus is, so to speak, absent and away from home, while in dreams (with the exception of certain rare occasions where we are aware of the situation and by an effort of will can change it) we are the spectator of a drama whose author and composer is the mental mechanism and in which our self—if it figures as one of the actors, does so shorn in a peculiar manner of its prerogatives of will and judgment. And this is why the story of our dream seems so true. Communication with the outer world being stopped, we no longer distinguish between fact and fancy. To shut our eyes is, in truth, to lose our bearings. He who imagines himself to be ascending Mont Blanc, the while he is quietly lying abed at home,—or believes himself in conversation

steal, to hoard, and to hide away all they can lay their hands on. Mere cleverness is no true sign of mental superiority; it is, in fact *automatic* intellect, and is comparable with instinct.

with persons who have long since departed this life, is, it is plain, labouring under the most singular delusion. It is as though he had, for the nonce, taken leave of his senses and his reason. And if it be said of the dreamer (whose best faculties seem thus laid on the shelf) that he is *not all there*, the very same thing is to be said also of the inmates of Bedlam and Colney Hatch: Truth to say, a man may be as wise as a judge in his waking hours, but when he lies down at night he shall be as mad as a March-hare. If it be said again, the best and healthiest sleep is that in which no dreams intrude, this does not remove sleep's mystery; rather is it thereby magnified, and serves more forcibly to bring to light the looseness of that tie which connects our true self or ego with the organ of its manifestation.

Furthermore, the unhinging of the mental organism in sleep may be the means of setting free latent powers of the most unusual and unexpected order. The curious instance of voluntary projection of the "double," first quoted, is a case in point, for it was only when the ordinary powers of sentience and thought were locked in sleep that the mandate of the conscious will was carried into effect. And this peculiar character applies with still greater force to that which has been described as an artificial kind of sleep, namely, mesmerism. The second case of the kind referred to (p. 129) is, indeed, a good illustration of the clairvoyant action of mesmerism, in which the field of perception appears to be so enlarged as actually to extend to the *locus in quo* of some far distant individual. Unaccountable, again, as the projection of the "double" seemed in the other cases mentioned, one cannot doubt that what happened here was a phenomenon of a kindred nature, assuming likewise the form of a spectral illusion or hallucination of sense.

"Familiarity breeds contempt," or we should be more struck with the strangeness of sleep. When a person is put under the influence of a narcotic we acknowledge that the tie which knits body and soul together is loosened. Let narcotism be pushed beyond a certain point, and it will remain for ever undone—the sleep of narcosis passes into the sleep of death. If we consider the matter attentively, therefore, it is impossible to regard the undoing of sleep as anything else but an abnormality, an aberration from the type. Hence, do those curious instances of "warning" and premonition generally befall in the watches of the night—birds of ill-omen are birds of night—not without some show of reason does folklore speak of the *witching* hour of night.

But a concurrence of abnormal conditions would seem to be necessary in order that these uncanny messages should be given and taken—some unusual event, such as an accident or crisis (generally the greatest crisis of all, or death), on the one side of the *rapport*, and, on the other, some peculiar phase of health, or at any rate some derangement of the nervous system which permits the emergence from the more obscure strata of mind, of that peculiar secondary pseudo-self which is alone capable of receiving such anomalous impressions. In some instances it would seem as if the *shock* thus imparted from a distant scene were powerful enough to arrest the attention of the conscious self while in the full tide of health and active life; more often, however, the person so influenced is in some "reduced" state—and such is sleep.

Now, it is manifest that the anomalous states of mind which we have passed in review imply, all of them, a disturbance, if not actual destruction, of that just balance in the psychical nature of man respecting what may be

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called its subjective and objective elements—(or, to put it differently, respecting our *memories* and our *sensations*)—which furnishes the human ego with its proper theatre of action. In every phase of ill-health, indeed, the subjective part of our nature seems to step into undue prominence; the nerves become *over-sensitive*; matters of no importance in themselves now assume exaggerated proportions and cause undue care and concern; uneasy dreams disturb the rest; delirium racks the brain of the fever-stricken. A healthy man is scarcely conscious of his body at all. All that rises into consciousness on this score may be described as a vague but enjoyable sense of ease and comfort—as a matter of fact it is not until they are in a state of *disease* that we become aware of our bodily organs. We do not feel the eye till it is injured or inflamed, and it takes a fit of indigestion to impress the fact that we possess digestive organs. That it should be so lies in the very nature of the case. For what is the bodily frame but an apparatus for putting the individual in relation with the world around him—that environment which is the primary source of all his experience, and should be the sole object of attention. Yet is this bodily organism itself a portion of nature; moreover it is that bit of nature which lies nearest to us and concerns us most. If now it be itself out of order the attention is, of necessity, deflected from its proper concerns, and centres in the deranged state of health. True, there may be severe bodily infirmity, and even protracted pain, and yet the “ego” is not to be turned from its duties. But mind stands nearer the “ego” than body, and hence it is in those ambiguous states—half bodily, half mental—in hysteria and hypochondriasis namely, that we see the state of health overriding all other considerations, and becoming the

sole object of thought. A step further, and the dislocation is complete. When a person is said to have lost his reason, the implication is that he is suffering from defective object-consciousness ; the subjective element is increased at the expense of the other side of the dualism,—hence, a failure in the ordinary tests of judgment and common-sense ; things do not appear to the individual as they really are, but as coloured by his morbid phantasy. And if a man habitually mistakes the images of his fancy for realities—if in his waking hours he confuses his thoughts about things with things themselves—if, in other words, his memories and his sensations get mixed, there is only one conclusion, the mental mechanism has broken down, the man is mad.

VIII.—CONCLUDING REMARKS SUGGESTIVE OF THE MORAL NATURE  
OF THE "EGO"—HEROISM AND MARTYRDOM.

WE have had occasion to point out the association of a low moral tone with certain instances of mental automatism which have come under our notice. Let us supplement what was then said by remarking that, as a general assertion, infirmity of mind may be taken as implying a corresponding defect in moral sentiment. In the case of criminals—in those, at all events, of congenital or confirmed type—it is safe to affirm some very serious mental defect, if there be not also obvious malformation of the brain. The medical practitioner whose duty it is to examine cases of mental aberration is instructed first to investigate the patient's notions as to right and wrong, and then to proceed to test the mental faculties in respect to delusions or hallucinations of sense.

Now it is plain that human reason and the moral sense cannot function in the absence of the will-ability of the animal frame—if the latter be paralyzed there can, of course, be no question of acting well or ill ; if presence of mind be lost no amount of good intention or right feeling will avail. And yet that the animal will may, on the other hand, be in full activity while conscience slumbers is a fact which too notoriously disfigures and darkens the history of each individual life to make it necessary to call any witness in attestation of the same. And hence, when we speak of enfeeblement of function and loss of control in the hysterical or paralytic, we do not predicate exactly the same thing as if we were speaking of some maimed animal—as, for instance, a bird with crippled wing, which is therefore incapable of flying at will. In man, the contingency of employing his active powers *wrongly* must be taken into account. Restore his muscular power to the paralytic, and this is not to say the man will use his limbs only for purposes of which his conscience will approve ; an assertion which has clearly no shadow of meaning in the case of an animal. So long as our theme is *man* there is something more implied than in the analogous situation in animal life ; something which places the actions of mankind on quite a different footing—makes such a mighty difference, in fact, that what may be quite right and proper in the one case may be very wrong and reprehensible in the other.

Consequently, when a contrast is drawn between voluntary and involuntary, or automatic action, it is the moral question which really lies at the root of the matter. For we cannot discuss men's acts without always bearing in mind the moral nature of human motives. The significance of the anomalous states

referred to rests, in the present connection therefore, in the implication that there is abeyance of the sense of responsibility or moral obligation.

We have spoken of the command of the "ego" being lost in mesmerism, in disease, in insanity, and in sleep, but it may be lost in another and a very much simpler fashion—not of necessity, but of a man's good will and pleasure. A man has only to turn his back upon his better judgment, to flout it, and tell it to come down off its pedestal of command, and the thing is done. It is, indeed, so extremely simple and easy, and has—as the demon of pleasure whispers—so much to recommend it, that it is a matter of most frequent occurrence. Nevertheless it is this abdication of the true self in favour of that lower executive which is the tool of animal propensity and passion—it is this which is meant when it is said a man has lost *himself*.

The interest attaching to the "ego" is, then, of the most practical kind; questions concerning the "ego" are, in fact, matters of conduct. But, given the normal capacity of will-ability, and supposing volition to be exercised in a variety of ways, this gives but an imperfect clue to the proper action of the "ego." For deeds do not wear their motives on the face of them; the hidden springs of action do not, as a rule, come into view. We have remarked, in an early passage, how much may be lost before it can be said a man has lost *himself*: it is also equally true that all else may remain precisely as it was—no one may be any the wiser—and yet a man shall have most completely lost himself. You cannot tell by looking at him or talking with him whether so and-so is or is not a traitor to himself.

But occasionally it is far otherwise. For, with no apparent breach of sanity or health, a man shall so use

(or rather misuse) his voluntary powers as that he must be treated like some dangerous animal which cannot be left at large. No one will say Napoleon was a madman, yet it was found advisable to shut him up in St. Helena. Where persons employ their voluntary powers wrongly, the safety of the community sometimes requires that they should be forcibly deprived of the possibility of wrong-doing, and where such persons have pleaded an irresistible impulse to do some mischievous thing, the suitable rejoinder is that the law has an irresistible impulse to lock them up—we call in the strong arm of the law to paralyze them, and even to put them to death. And although in matters of conscience there can hardly be any true criterion of an objective character (conscientious scruples being an affair of the heart, in which no man may judge for another), an approximative one, there must of necessity be, seeing that man does not live to himself alone, but fulfils also a corporate capacity in the family and the state. Yet, even here, where an objective standard of morals is recognized in some penal code, the greatest difficulty is often experienced in arriving at a correct judgment, and justice is sometimes known to miscarry. Whether misdeeds are due to a wilfulness which might with proper care have been brought under control, or whether they are the inevitable fruit of a depraved constitution—whether in any particular case crime is due to bad temper or bad brain-formation, to sin or to madness—such are the perpetually recurring problems of law and police.

Those who are *au courant* with the criminal register well know that the life of many a convict is one long oscillation between the prison and the asylum. “Like a bad coin the mind of such an individual seems to bear the stamp of insanity on the one side, and of criminality

and vice on the other ; and hence the results of inspection are found to vary according to which side turns up, when the conduct of the man, like the ring of the coin, excites attention and suspicion."

The following case, recently tried in the courts on the capital charge of homicide, illustrates the point in question. The delinquent was a youth of eighteen ; he had suffered since earliest childhood from epileptic fits, but with the exception of occasional outbursts of temper was a fairly well-disposed lad. One day he refused to join the family party at cards—a most unusual thing, and declined also to go out and have a walk with a friend. He was then observed writing something on a slip of paper which was afterwards found in his pocket. The paper contained these words : "I have been so badly treated by that beast, my sister Constance, that I must put an end to her life by shooting." He also added that knowing he must die for the act he would shoot himself too. Next morning he took his father's gun and deliberately shot his sister dead, afterwards attempting to destroy himself. The court decided that the culprit, being conscious of right and wrong, was responsible for his actions, and therefore guilty of wilful murder ; he was accordingly condemned to the last penalty of the law, and this was carried out. Yet a demurrer might be lodged against this judgment on the ground that what made the act an *insane* act—and the youth therefore not morally responsible for what he had done—is the fact that he magnified his sister's offence into a *crime only expiable by death*.

Much might be said on the caution and judgment required in punishing children who may display unaccountable fits of temper ; for this is often due—perhaps oftener than people think—to unsoundness of

constitution rather than perversity of will. Many cases are on record of certain so-called "post-epileptic" phenomena, manifested in sudden impulses of strange behaviour, for which there seems no reason whatever :—as when a little girl of good and affectionate disposition all at once feels *obliged* to strike her mother, although she does not in the least know why.

Now to pronounce on the beginnings of morbid action is a task of no small difficulty in matters pertaining to physical health—but how much more so when the mental and moral nature of man is concerned. To decide when idiosyncrasy becomes eccentricity, and when eccentricity is to be regarded as culpable, would furnish food for endless debate. When, however, the matter passes beyond the range of private interests, and comes into collision with the public safety,—where, that is to say, erratic conduct is to be taken as indicative either of criminal intent or unsoundness of mind, the subject assumes another character, and is susceptible of a more definite issue. Conduct must then be estimated by certain practical tests administered by what may be called the corporate conscience of the community, and precautionary measures may become necessary.

Yet, if it be true that good conduct is, as we have implied, the *raison d'être* of the human will—the *métier* of the human ego—should we not discern the abeyance of the same rather in states of guilt and sin, than in states of automatism like hypnotism and sleep-walking ; should not such negative instances be sought in the police-court and the penitentiary, rather than in the hospital or asylum ; and would it not be the confirmed criminal rather than the confirmed lunatic of whom the eclipse of the "ego" might most appropriately be affirmed ?

It might, in the first place, be pointed out in reply that as soon as matters of conduct—be it from unsoundness of mind, or be it from unmanageableness of temper—have reached a stage in which it becomes necessary to place the individual under restraint, the subject has already passed out of the proper domain of the “ego,” has, in fine, entered that phase of loss of control in which a man is no longer answerable for his actions.

But there are not a few reasons why negative cases should be preferably drawn from the category of disease or defect of body or mind. There is an obvious advantage in unfolding the nature of the “ego” in a treatise which starts from matters physical and psychical, since this brings it within touch of other domains of nature, other interests of man, other sources of knowledge. It may well be that human volition is to be regarded as spiritual in its nature, yet we have no experience of other spiritual beings—angels or devils—which would be of any value in a discussion founded on the data of science and common-sense. The sole source of comparative knowledge which we possess on the subject lies in a reference to the animal kingdom, and the main point of the whole probably consists in distinguishing between the conscience-guided will of man, and the instinct-guided will of animals—which might be called *their* soul or ego ; and which, since man is also one of the higher animals, acts in him as well.

Even confining ourselves to the nature and science of man there is ample room for selection. At the outset we found it necessary to distinguish the real self or ego from the *character*. Were they identical our task had been lighter. One may fasten upon salient points in character and draw a portraiture accordingly ; but this does not go to the heart of the matter. What

we want to get at is the original of the picture, the maker of character, the actor, the willer, the doer himself.

Yet how delineate that invisible and intangible force or principle which each one feels to be so special to himself, but which is at the same time—and unlike the idiosyncrasy of form and character by which each is differenced from his fellow—the common lot of all? And it became plainer as we proceeded that the subject of our scrutiny was something not by any means conterminous with the totality of man's composite being; that many other items in life's count pose more conspicuously, strike the eye far more forcibly than the impalpable, viewless, intermittent, and wavering force of the real self or ego; yet not in those more showy and, to all appearance, more substantial belongings and trappings of personality shall a man, if he take himself to task, recognize the true law and *logos* of his being, but in the exercise—fitful though it be—of his conscience-guided will.\*

Hence our discussion is the discussion of a principle—of an essence, shall we say, for an essence implies something *from which* it is extracted and drawn? A body contains much more than its essence; there is much in the fruit besides its core and kernel; in man there is much besides his "ego." Indeed, the subject is hampered by the very profusion and wealth of material out of which our conception of the true self or

\* It is impossible to deny that even in physical life conditions may occur where the human ego may be said to be non-existent. The hopeless imbecile, moral or mental; the infant, whose frail frame perishes before time is given to lay the foundation of the future "ego"; and possibly, certain crude specimens of savage life where man is but a step removed from the beasts with whom he herds—in cases such as these the voice of reason plainly declares there is no semblance of the self-conscious and conscience-guided personality of man.

ego has to be drawn—as, by way of example, we extract the pith and marrow of some case in law or medicine from a mass of collateral details, which are accessory but non-essential.

Is it said this refines away too much, makes too little of the "ego"; that too thin and attenuated a portraiture is given by thus identifying the "ego" with nothing more than *good conduct*? We might refer once again to a certain dynamical formula which we have already figured in these pages\* for the purpose of illustrating the important truth that force would be impossible and inconceivable if it were not for the substantial basis of matter which is the means, and sole vehicle, of its manifestation. And what is the *matter* of the soul or ego? Why, all the opportunities which enter into the course of a man's conscious life and are fit to bear the insignia of his conscientious approval. And if this be so it will be conceded that the concerns of the real self or ego are not by any means so very limited or partial.

Is it further queried that this view makes of the "ego" nothing more than that *rule of right*, which is not of our making, but into which we are born—that it is colourless, impersonal, and therefore untrue? It needs only to recall the fact that this rule of right is nothing to us as individuals and persons until we make use of it and test it—apply and appropriate it. But to appropriate a thing is to make it our own; henceforward it forms part and parcel of ourselves.

We have remarked how much may be lost before a man shall lose *himself*; on the other hand, how easily a man can—how often he does—thus lose himself. In the course of our remarks we have spoken too of other losses in man's estate,—we have spoken, namely, of

\* *Vide supra*, p. 9.

situations of mental shock or tension which so break in upon and interrupt the normal current of life, that a man is said, for the time being, to be "lost." Now, situations such as these may or may not touch the real self or ego. Let us refer, finally, to one that does, and does so in the most eminent degree;—for if it can be easily lost, the "ego" may, as we said in the beginning, be saved when all else is gone. Let us refer, as a case in point, to the closing episode in the career of that brave hero of the cross, the late Bishop Hannington. While being dragged away, as he supposed, to be murdered, and suffering grievous torture in every limb, he writes in the last lines of his diary, "I sang, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' and then laughed at the very agony of my situation." What a picture, this, of the unhinging of normal consciousness under the stress of strong excitement!

Let us consider this matter for a moment—the mental attitude of the Christian martyr, the motive which actuates the hero in every age. And what is this strange exaltation? Is reason lost, is this madness? Not so, for powers of reflection and judgment are perfectly clear. A cruel death has often been met with a quiet collectedness, a cool counting of the cost, which leaves no doubt on that score. This is not the intense self-preoccupation of the insane, for the hero gives himself up for others, and for a cause which exists also independently of him and his individual sympathies.

That the stream of nervous energy is deeply engaged, that there is a most extraordinary tension of rapt feeling at such moments, admits of no doubt—nor can the situation fail to suggest a close parallel to that peculiar state of absorbed attention so characteristic of the somnambulic trance. Somnambulist and martyr are both the subject

of a peculiar and, as it seems, most unearthly state of highly wrought mental tension—in both there is a disengagement of power which transcends the manifestations of current life ; in both there is forgetfulness of self. In what lies the difference ?

The difference lies in the posture of the will. In the one case there is abeyance of man's ordinary powers of choice and volition, and with it all sense of moral obligation ; in the other, it is so far otherwise, that the whole economy seems compacted and braced to give effect to this supreme effort of the conscious will. In the sleep-walker, or in the automaton of the mesmeric trance, it is the lower executive which is at work. The case we are now considering affords the most striking contrast, inasmuch as it is a rare example of the mastery of the highest nervous centres—that higher executive which is the proper organ of the soul—a mastery so puissant, as to overrule the passionate craving of the animal nature for prolonged existence, and to nerve the weakest frame to undergo most horrible pains. In the one case we see machinery—in the other we recognize the crucial test of conscience-guided will ; the one is a semblance, a caricature of individualism, a pseudo-personality—in the other personality shines with all the genuine lustre of a free-will offering.

And note, further, if the doings of a mesmerized person excite our curiosity, perhaps our pity, perhaps even a feeling akin to indignation and disgust, that other spectacle kindles our liveliest admiration—it touches the heart with a force of feeling which mocks expression ; it is universally regarded as the triumph of the spiritual nature of man. “The pains of martyrs or the losses of self-sacrifice are never classed among the evil things of the world. They are its light places rather, the culmi-

nating points at which humanity has displayed its true glory and reached its perfect level."

Considerations such as these serve to show in the plainest manner the spiritual or moral nature of the human ego. For what is it that we see in the achievements and sufferings of hero and martyr, but examples of the great law of self-sacrifice, a law which constrains the spirit of man to mingle and unite with some supreme object of regard which meets with the approval of conscience. And let us mark well this latter point (for the question really turns upon considerations of motive), as to whether that which is being done or suffered is in harmony with the dictates of conscience. For, if not, what then? Why, then, it is nothing of the kind meant.

The soldier pressed into the service of the state and slaughtered for reasons he knows not why, the criminal who pays in a violent and shameful death his debt to an outraged society, nay, every act of grudging benevolence, which, while it brings blessing to him who receives does most assuredly fail to bless him that gives—all these are examples of sacrifice, but they are not examples of *self-sacrifice*; they do not bear the true ring of self-surrender, they are not the voluntary act of conscience-guided will. For what we are now discussing is the abasement of self by self, the immolation of the natural, animal, selfish self at duty's call. And why this self-sacrifice? Is this the fruit of misery, fear, or passion, is this the craze of the sick brain, a reckless throwing away of the good things of life—of life itself, so dear to the ego, and without which this shall pass away and vanish for ever from earth's familiar scenes? By no means, and not necessarily is this the "sickly dream of hysterical women and half-starved men,"—(Hannington,

the missionary hero, was as sturdy an Englishman as ever lived)—but this sacrifice unto death is the natural result of the fashion of man's ego, the settled conviction that what seems loss is in reality gain—a belief or trust in which the soul rests and is secure and blest.

It was this that made Gordon choose death at Khartoum. He might have escaped, not for himself (his soul was above fear), but for the sake of the great work in hand—and what a welcome had awaited him! But no, he chose to die. It was not the precept of worldly wisdom, but it was the call of the higher law.

The death of the hero, the last agony of the martyr is a revelation of the true meaning of the human ego ; it lays bare, as by a stroke of lightning, this hidden principle in every human breast. Electricity is everywhere at work, silently weaving the outward garb of nature, in earth, in air, and ocean, but occasionally its aspect is changed, and then its hidden power leaps forth in the blinding, startling, scathing testimony of the lightning. Is not this a symbol of man ? "The trivial task, the daily round," gives room for souls to energize and act, but sometimes more is required, and then, in some dark hour of extremity and pain the "ego" stands forth, a monument for all. Then we see, we understand—like the lode-star, it makes us tremble to humanity's true pole—then we acknowledge of what stuff man's true self is made.



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III.

*ON THE EXERCISE OF THE  
JUDGMENT.*

*“No man ever knew or can know what will be the ultimate result to himself or to others of any given line of conduct. But every man may know, and most of us do know, what is a just and unjust act.”*

**JOHN RUSKIN.**

### III.

## On the Exercise of the Judgment.

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### I.—CASES OF CONSCIENCE.

“ **W**HEN your heart tempts to some wandering from the line allotted to the rest of men and whispers, ‘This may be crime in others but is not so in thee,’ tremble, cling fast to the path you are lured to leave, remember me !”

Every one knows the story of *Eugene Aram*;—an episode in real life, be it remembered, so pregnant with dramatic interest as to lend itself to the moving art of poet and writer of fiction. It was Eugene Aram that penned these memorable words—this death-note, flung forth from the very brink of that abyss of destruction to which his rash act had brought him ; surely a note of warning, this, to all who shall ever find themselves in doubt and difficulty as to the course they should pursue.

And if any ask, how it was that so fine a spirit fell so low, the answer is not far to seek. It is not difficult to see that the initial error of judgment was due to a motive—it had better be called a passion—which this man had allowed to gain complete mastery over his mind. It was no ignoble, base desire, the fruit of

a corrupt and selfish nature, lured Aram from the beaten track ; on the contrary, and far from being a vice, the motive in question was one of the most laudable aspirations a man may entertain ; it was, namely, the love of knowledge—what could be more innocent !

But Aram was poor, and poverty galled a spirit naturally gifted with a force and fire beyond the ordinary mould. He was ambitious of certain projects of scientific research, and conceived his humble means an insuperable barrier to success.

Now, as luck would have it, events threw in his way a certain individual of contemptible character, whose fortune (which appears not to have been inconsiderable) was wasted in profligacy and vice—a being of whom it might be said it were good if the world were quit. Why must this pestiferous creature live to cumber the earth ? Does not the principle of sacrifice operate in the works and ways of nature and of man ? And if the sacrifice of so disreputable a life should be instrumental in promoting the well-being of mankind by strengthening the hands of its benefactors, then in God's name let us away with it—and who is there will call the act in question ?

So argued Eugene Aram, and thus did a fearful opportunity begin to take shape in his mind as a dread possibility—until we find him not only contemplating, but actually bracing himself for, the execution of a capital crime.

Let the situation be described in his own words :— “ I could not rest in my chamber,” he wrote in that last testamentary evidence of his prison cell ; “ I went forth and walked about the town, the night deepened, I saw the lights withdrawn, one by one, and at length all was hushed. Silence and sleep kept court over the

abodes of men. That stillness, that quiet, how deeply it sank into my heart! Nature never seemed to me to make so dread a pause. I felt as if I and my intended victim had been left alone in the world. I had wrapped myself above fear into a high and preternatural madness of mind. I looked on the deed I was about to commit as a great and solemn sacrifice to knowledge, whose priest I was. The very silence breathed to me of a stern and awful sanctity; the repose, not of the charnel house, but of the altar. I heard the clock strike hour after hour, but I neither faltered nor grew impatient. My mind lay hushed in its design."

The sequel is well known:—

“Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,  
And one with a heavy stone,  
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,  
And then the deed was done.”

But not so: for Eugene Aram the deed was not yet over and done with. “Our deeds,” says George Eliot, “are like children born to us, they live and act apart from our will.” Never was this truth more strikingly exemplified than in the present case. For what were the fruits of this frightful deed? Did it answer to expectation? Did it turn out an unalloyed gain, and enrich the thinker with fresh funds of power for the good of mankind? Ah, no. Aram had surely stifled the dictates of the heart in following the calculation of his thought. He had forgotten that truth has a “quiet breast,” that a violated conscience will not leave the mind to pursue its work in quietude and peace. For now, Eugene Aram was ever more haunted with the intolerable, sickening dread of detection. Nor was this all; for in that “new terrible life lying on the other side of the deed which had fulfilled the criminal desire,”

all his old zest, all his wonted force of impassioned and consecrating zeal was for ever fled. "Where now," to use his own words, "was the desire of applying that wisdom to the service of mankind. Gone, dead, buried for ever in my bosom. When the deed was done mankind seemed suddenly to have grown my foes. I looked upon them with other eyes. I knew I carried within that secret which if bared to-day would make them loathe and hate me."

Moreover, as if to enhance the bitter irony of fate—as if more deeply to imprint the verdict of self-condemnation, and add a keener tooth to conscience, it so fell out that only three days after the committal of the deed Aram came in for some property left him by a deceased relative.

Now it will be admitted that the exercise of the judgment—or how a man shall conduct himself—is an affair of a peculiarly individual and private nature. It all centres in a question of motive. And this is our reason for commencing the inquiry with what the casuist would call a "case of conscience." The inward motive rather than the overt act is the burden of the present theme. And this must be steadily kept in view; lest the nature or gravity of the *act* disqualify for a calm consideration of the admissibility of the *motive*.

There is, of course, but one construction to be put upon Eugene Aram's sorrowful tale. It is true, there are cases where killing is deemed no murder—where life is sacrificed in battle, for instance, or where it is taken judicially as a penalty of the law; but in the case in question the wickedness of the crime admits of no palliation, and as soon as detected it met with its inevitable fate at the hands of the public executioner.

What, however, is more important for us to note is that there seemed no doubt also that the perpetrator of the deed felt himself to be in the proper sense of the word—a malefactor. We have seen how Aram described the attitude of his mind in the near anticipation of the event—his conscience was at rest. But was his conscience at rest when the question first presented itself to his judgment? His own words provide the answer—an answer pregnant with all the misery of unavailing self-reproach. The matter presented itself but too clearly as a temptation, to which his better judgment at last yielded.

But indeed, and before this direful conclusion was reached, the battle was already lost. For was not reason dethroned and conscience a slave as soon as the “love of knowledge” had become the ruling passion? Was it not this loosening of the bands of conscience which could make it possible to transform so fearful an opportunity into a grim reality?

Well then (the reader will here be inclined to ask), if the conduct of Eugene Aram was so plainly wrong from beginning to end, if we discern in its inception, no less than in its final issue, an infraction of the moral law, why do you quote it in the present connection—why select it as a fitting prelude to the investigation of conduct and its motives?

Because it bears upon a very important question in the practical concerns of life, the question namely as to whether it is ever right to violate general principles in the interest of some special need.

Now the above episode suggests in a very impressive manner the perils of this kind of private judgment. In defiance of the recognized moral order—in defiance also of the restraining voice within, Aram made this into a

question of private opinion. He regarded that as an open question, which morality, both public and private, united to close and altogether banish from the sphere of option. And if he did wrong, if a most grievous error in judgment was committed—if, moreover, it is abundantly clear that where a motive, however good in itself, has developed the morbid character of a passion, there must necessarily be an end to anything like sound judgment—shall we shut our eyes to the fact that questions, encompassed with doubt and difficulty, do arise and must be settled one way or another? Surely there are few persons to whom such trials of judgment are unknown. Nay more, there are probably few travellers on life's route who have not felt it, at some time or other, perfectly justifiable and right to do violence to some general moral law for the sake of an urgent present need.

To begin with peccadilloes:—it is wrong to tell a lie; yet feelings of kindness and courtesy occasionally prompt us not only to hide, but even to pervert the truth. Examples will occur to every one. Instances may readily be conceived where A does what he deems a kindness to B (perhaps at some personal loss or inconvenience to himself), and yet, after all, A is greatly mistaken; the supposed favour is regarded by B with anything but feelings of satisfaction,—but how can the truth be told without a breach of etiquette, which, under certain circumstances, would clearly be inadmissible? Even in so trivial a matter as accepting an invitation to dinner, how is it possible to do this without some semblance of gratification, although this may be at the expense of strict veracity? That there are occasions when the truth must be spoken at all hazards, does not alter the fact that a desire to spare the feelings of others is generally held to justify some veiling of the naked truth, and that whoso

acts in a contrary fashion is rightly considered a churl and no gentleman. A genuine dislike of everything shifty and underhand, coupled with the loyal admiration of what is sincere and aboveboard, is the stamp of an honourable man and true ; but it would be sad, indeed, if such sentiments were incompatible with the exercise of taste and tact, and a deference for the feelings of others.

To speak of "conventional lying," as a practice which *makes it pleasant* for both parties, is a very objectionable and mischievous kind of loose talking. Truth is no toy that it can be bandied about with impunity ; far rather is it like some sharp instrument, for it is sure to wound him who thus mishandles it. All centres, as we said, in questions of motive. Nothing can justify the dissembling of truth for selfish ends—to resort to subterfuge for the sake of escaping something disagreeable to oneself is cowardly and mean—but let the very same action be done in order to shelter someone from injury or harm, and this is to put another face on the matter.

But what is truth if it cannot hold its own ?—we still hear someone say. Can a good cause ever be promoted by equivocation and falsehood ? And again, What are we that we should take the matter into our own hands ? Granted that a precious life might be saved by some slight perversion of the truth—the wife and mother restored to her sorrowing husband and little ones, the philanthropist given back to continue God's work in the world—how do we know, after all, that it is well this life should be spared ? The reply is, we are bound to act for the best. Very possibly truth—what is good for us—may be different from that which we think ; still we are in duty bound to act in accordance with what we conceive to be the truth, for in no other wise does truth exist

for us than this. Truth does not exist apart from human thoughts and acts, and the circumstances of human life —or, at least, not in any sense that is worth serious discussion. Conduct is not easy, just because it is affiliated, in a life-partnership, with doubt and trial ; and there is no one of matured faculties who is exempted from treading that slippery path called the “exercise of the judgment.” *Judicium difficile*, was an aphorism of one of the wisest, and at the same time, most practical of men.\*

Consider now the following case, which if less appalling than that of Eugene Aram, resembles it in motive, as well as in the sense of guilt involved, as also in its tragic end.

A gentleman of excellent character, and enjoying the esteem of all who knew him, suddenly found himself in pecuniary difficulties, though through no fault of his own. An affectionate husband and the fondly attached father of a large family, it appeared to him that the moment had come when, for the sake of those dependent on him, it became right to do an otherwise unjustifiable thing. He determined to take out of the business where he acted as cashier a certain sum of money, which he was confident of being able to replace against stock-taking at the close of the year. His expectation proved fallacious ; the end of the year came before he could replace the sum, and unable to bear the dishonour of the situation the unfortunate man, in a moment of desperation, took his own life.

Now this seems fairly a case in point. Here was a man of upright character, respected by all who knew him, and an honoured servant in a house of business where he had held a responsible post for many years.

\* Hippocrates, the “Father of medicine.”

The way in which his employer received the news of the fatal deed testified to the esteem in which he held the deceased, and that, too, at the very moment when the painful motive of the act was brought to light. No shadow of resentment at the fraudulent act seemed to have crossed his mind. In accents of heart-felt concern, he exclaimed, Why had he not acquainted him with the trouble he was in, and how gladly would he have helped to tide him over his difficulties ! While to the bereaved wife and family he acted in so handsome and friendly a manner as to dissipate any shadow of delinquency from the memory of deceased : the embezzlement was never again referred to, an ample sum of money was placed at the disposal of the widow, and the eldest son forthwith installed in the confidential position which his lamented father had filled.

What shall we say of the actor and the action in this unhappy piece of business ? To remove a sum of money from a cash-box clandestinely, and for purposes other than those connected with trade, is, of course, a most dishonourable thing to do. That it was done for no nefarious or selfish end, but, as one might say, from a motive of sheer benevolence, and, moreover, in the firm persuasion that the sum could and would be made up, in time, does not alter the nature of the act. That the act was wrong in itself admits of no doubt. The question is—did circumstances justify the doing of this wrong thing ? And if to this challenge judgment answered, Yes, the course of events seemed to return a most terribly emphatic, No.

Now, the most likely consequences to have happened here were just those which did not come to pass. And if it had been otherwise, if the event had turned out as anticipated (and the money been replaced in time) can

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it be supposed there would have been the terrible stain upon this man's conscience which drove him to lay violent hands upon his life ?

It is very commonly asserted that conduct cannot be rightly estimated apart from its *consequences*. But let us observe the very important distinction between the *supposed* consequences which a man conceives will follow (and which very properly should influence him in making up his mind), and the consequences which do actually befall as time goes on :—*these* belong to the future, while the exercise of the judgment is charged with all the *empressement* of the moment, which may not be set aside. Let anyone take himself sedulously to task, let him set his memory at work, and he will probably find that he has not been spared situations like the following :—a certain thing is done which, on careful consideration, was believed to be the right thing to do. Time goes on, and with it comes a change in opinion. That action is now seen in a new light ; the doer of it is not any more so sure it was the right thing to have done ; he now thinks, in fact, it was decidedly wrong. That is to say, supposing he were once again in the same circumstances he would (with the change time has wrought) consider it not right but wrong to act as he acted before. But *was* it wrong ? Can the verdict of the future alter the sanctions of the present—which is, in truth, all we have to go upon ? Can we thus be repudiating our former selves ? Past experience is our only guide to present action—the page of the past lies open and can be read, that of the morrow is not yet written—we cannot be drawing upon the capital of the future. And if, with the best intentions, and the most anxious care, we, nevertheless, fail to interpret the future from our experiences in the past—if our expecta-

tions prove false—is the failure to be laid at our door, or does it not rather lie in the circumstances of the case, which are presumably beyond our foresight and control?

In the case of Eugene Aram a legacy fell due only three days after the fatal deed—had this happened sooner all the anguish of that terrible declension might have been spared. And, similarly, could the cashier have foreseen his inability to pay up the stolen money he certainly would not have helped himself out of the till.

All this may be admitted, and yet it may be held that the consequences which follow a certain course of action (those, for instance, which actually did follow in the cases quoted) are to be taken as a verdict on the same in the sense of an overruling providence—as testifying to the inevitable sequence of the moral law. Probably there are few right-minded persons who, after a perusal of the foregoing pages, will not be inclined to take this view: they will discern in these terrible *dénouements*, the workings of that Nemesis or fate which sooner or later shall overtake every evil doer;—Did not the overwhelming and blasting force of conscience (they will say) discover to these two men that they had made a great and irretrievable blunder; were they not struck down and doomed to an untimely end as by the very hand of God?

This was certainly the view *they* took. Eugene Aram's "remember me," must for ever ring in the ear of him who is tempted thus to take the moral law into his own hands—the terrible fate of that other speaks to us also in the same strain.

But, not to allow the anguish of these painful scenes to usurp the place of rational inquiry, let it be observed, further, that calamitous events may be fraught with a significance to the sufferer which they do not carry in

the sight of others. The late Dr. John Reid, who was afflicted with a painful malady (to which he ultimately succumbed), is said to have recognized in that peculiar form of disease a special dispensation, in reference, namely, to certain physiological labours of his which had entailed suffering on the lower animals. Yet this was a man so blameless in character and of so gentle a spirit that such an idea would have been scouted by any of his friends. So too the words of Holy Writ—"Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" should make us cautious in interpreting physical ills and disaster as special tokens and messengers of divine displeasure. And if it be replied that the tenor of the above remark is not applicable in cases where the catastrophe is plainly the result of the wrong-doing, and seems to follow as a necessary consequence, it still remains to be pointed out (even at the risk of diminishing their ethical value), that instances such as these would be efficacious in deterring from some contemplated course of doubtful conduct, probably only in so far as the situations were analogous. Suppose, for example, an individual were tempted to take the property or the life of another under the impression that by so doing an important service would be rendered, he might, if he had laid to heart the moral of the foregoing pages, be restrained from carrying out such a course of action. That is to say, the analogy would have to be very strong—the case would have to be very similar indeed—in order that the moral should be turned to practical account. For it is precisely these trying situations of doubt and dilemma which present themselves as something so peculiarly unique and special to the individual. It is a characteristic of such junctures in

life that a man feels himself so utterly abandoned to his own devices, left to shift for himself—singled out, as it were, to bear this burden which no one else can bear for him : he is therefore little likely to be aided or guided by analogy.

And, oh ! how wildly, at such a time, does the mind cast about for some external aid to prop and sustain its failing energies ; how gladly would he who is thus torn betwixt anxiety and doubt, betake himself to the refuge-city of common usage and convention ; how willingly would he waive this perilous prerogative of private judgment to take shelter under the broad ægis of current opinion.

And why not ? Is it not precisely at these times that general rules should be of use in guiding conduct ? Is it not just then—when the situation is so intensely subjective, and feeling runs so high—is it not just then that the steady influence of tried and recognized principles should come into operation ; nay, is it not the very office of principle that it shall save a man from predicaments like these ?

Yes,—*but not always*. To give an unqualified assent to the proposition would be to overlook a truth of cardinal importance. For what would it mean ? It would mean, in effect, to place *principle* above *judgment*. It would mean the putting a higher value upon something thought out by others and imposed on the individual as a rule of conduct, than on that which is, after all, the true measure of a man's worth—the *bond fide* exercise of his own powers. For is it not plain that principles are themselves but the creatures of human necessities and needs—are, indeed, the natural outcome of these ? Moreover, it needs only to call to mind how that men have oftentimes gone wrong on principle, and on the other

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hand, that good, and not always evil results have followed the violation of principle, to see that there remains no royal road for the discovery of truth.

But views of a practical nature must be enforced by an appeal to fact. Let us observe then how that circumstances are sometimes so urgent as to compel the use of extreme measures. A cancer can be properly dealt with only by excision, even at the expense of the part of the frame in which it has its seat. The interests of social order sometimes imperatively demand that a riot shall be quelled, even though it be through bloodshed. The intelligent conduct of human affairs necessarily involves the principle of sacrifice—that wrong of a certain kind be done in order to prevent a worse thing happening. If the records of history are to be trusted it would seem that the exercise of a little severity on the part of the king would in all probability have spared France and humanity the unutterable shame of the enormities of '97. Could Louis XVI. have brought himself to violate what he considered the principle of patriotism, could he have made up his mind to sacrifice a few of his French subjects in order to save the state, we might never have had to shudder at the atrocities of that fearful time. Granted that this great event—the first French revolution—brought great benefits in its train (though this is still a matter of dispute), how do we know that these might not also have come to pass in a better way and at a less terrible price? A frightful price, indeed, to pay for the refusal of one individual to acknowledge that the moment had come for the *exercise of judgment as against principle*.

Can it be denied that expediency sometimes demands action though it be at the expense of principle; and conversely, that there may be a deference to principle

which fails to recognize the urgency of the moment? Was not an illustration of this to be seen in the attitude of the American press, when it declared itself willing to give up the ringleaders of the Fenian murder-league, "if it could be done without infringing the sacred principles upon which political asylum is based"? How could anything *sacred* be justly urged as a reason why men who had made murder their profession should not be brought to justice?

Again, a strict adherence to the principle of truthfulness would forbid the use of artifice and dissimulation. To dress up detectives in plain clothes is the acting of a lie; yet who, when a gang of burglars is about, will not deem this a perfectly legitimate piece of deception if it be the means of putting a stop to robbery and murder? Or to take an illustration from the page of history. During one phase of the struggle between France and England for the North American settlements, the western frontier was harried by Indians, hired by the French for this purpose. Nor could the most heartrending accounts of the atrocities inflicted by these murderous savages on defenceless women and children, move the Quaker assembly of Philadelphia to send military aid,—it being a principle with this religious sect that, "all war is inconsistent with the precept and example of the Gospel." A spectacle was here presented, at which the heart sickens; "the mortal fear of women and children in the solitude of their wilderness homes haunted with nightmares of horror that were but the forecast of imminent reality"—(for these human fiends did not only kill, they revelled in butchery, and even little children were scalped alive!)—while "far to the east, sheltered from danger, the Quakers could ply their trades, tend their shops, till

their farms and discourse at their ease on the wickedness of war.”\*

Now if we marvel at the mockery which can pursue the cruel practices of war in the name of the Prince of Peace, we must not forget that religious feeling divorced from the natural affections may give rise to inhumanities no less shocking. If the church has been persecuted, she has herself been a ruthless persecutor—the strange anomaly of an *immoral religion* has too often disfigured the annals of the past. And if the Quaker principle, albeit so righteous in itself, could thus stand in the way of succour to a people in these piteous straits, we cannot but think it laboured, in this respect at any rate, under the same lamentable imputation.

And lastly let us turn to an example or two of the *infringement of principle* with both motives and consequences of obvious excellence. By breaking his monastic vows and marrying Catherine von Bora, Luther certainly did violence to a moral law which he had pledged himself to observe; but vows of celibacy had often been broken before with an impure and selfish motive; it was the spirit in which it was done in Luther’s case which justified the breach of faith. Socrates is held to have been one of history’s brightest examples of an upright and truth-loving man—it is admitted that his life was spent in doing good. In this, however, he ran counter to the precepts of the age, and was put to death, marvellous to say, on a charge of impiety and immorality. And to pass to the highest example of all, let us not forget that it was the same deference to current doctrine which brought the same charge and the same capital sentence against Him in whom there was “no guile.”

\* Parkman’s *Montcalm and Wolfe*, I., p. 339:

II.—CASES OF EMERGENCY.

BUT the exercise of the judgment is not always hampered with so heavy a burden of moral responsibility. Conduct is often guided by considerations which fall short of the deeper motive of conscience. Indeed, it were well, one is inclined to think, if persons who are too disposed—morbidly so, perhaps—to regard every question as a case of conscience were to make the effort to exercise their judgment before it comes to this. For no sooner do questions enter the *atmosphère morale* than they assume such a very grave aspect, people begin to be so very much afraid of going wrong, that the healthy action of the judgment is apt to be seriously impaired.

Let us pass on now to notice a class of cases which, although free from moral bias, will nevertheless be felt to resemble those just considered in their character of urgent need. It is true, for the matter of that (whether time for deliberation be short or long) situations like those we have been discussing may well appear to the individual fraught with an urgency, an insistence, which brooks no burking or delay. Indeed, whenever the feelings are powerfully, and at the same time painfully, excited, the situation seems always to assume the strained character of an emergency—it was an emergency which drove the cashier to the commission of that dishonest act. Properly speaking, however, an emergency-case is one in which there is no time for deliberation, no time for parleying or the balancing of alternative courses of action; the situation is taken in at a glance, and the mind must be made up instantly. “Out on the plains a feller gits into places where he’s got to think fast; not in words but in great chinks

and streaks of ideas," was the striking testimony of some comrade of "Buffalo Bill." But it is not only the exigencies of a prairie life which urges the necessity of coming to quick decisions; the possible causes of misadventure are everywhere at work; and any day a man's judgment may be suddenly and terribly taxed as to what is the right thing to be done in a runaway carriage, a burning theatre, or a railway collision.

Now the first and natural impulse when life seems trembling in the balance is to take to headlong flight, to escape at all hazards, after the manner of the hunted animal. At such a moment, fright usurps the place of reason, and people forget the well-known fact that the chance of safety—in the burning theatre for instance, consists in keeping one's place for a few moments, and that to join in the wild rout to the doors is to run the imminent risk of being crushed to death. The same remark applies to the dangers of a carriage accident. Few people have the presence of mind to retain their seat while the vehicle is being whirled along by the terrified horses—although everyone will acknowledge the wisdom of this in theory. Some years ago a coach accident happened at the head of Glencoe, at a place where the road zigzags down a steep incline. At one of the turnings the leaders got off the track and dragged the vehicle after them. The outside passengers all jumped off, and all sustained injuries, while the one inside passenger, who had the presence of mind to keep his seat, was alone unhurt, although the conveyance was shattered to pieces. Now although a person may be persuaded in his cool moments that in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred it is better to sit still and not spring to the door, the urgency of the situation cripples his powers of judgment, and leads to the instant but

unreasoning conclusion that the hundredth chance occasion has been encountered which makes precipitate flight absolutely essential for safety. A certain eminent hospital physician used to make a point of offering the following very sound piece of advice to his class:—"The first thing to do in going to a new case is not to lose your presence of mind." And the wisdom of such counsel becomes evident if one reflects how easily presence of mind is lost if we do not acknowledge to ourselves the probability of losing it. Yet many a man might remain cool and collected in the presence of danger if he meet it alone; but fear is contagious, and the panic spreads: he is unnerved by the example of others, and allows himself to be borne along with the crowd.

But let it be further noted that if fear paralyzes and unfits for action, fear may itself be paralyzed. While the raw recruit who finds himself for the first time under fire is ready to drop with fright, and would take to his heels if he dared, a familiarity with danger has taught the veteran to be calm and collected amid a storm of bullets. The manner in which danger affects the mind is thus largely contingent on habit and temperament. Still the subtle machinery of mind is probably something so far beyond our exact apprehension that one could not well say beforehand how a certain individual would meet some particular crisis—whether fear will paralyze his judgment, or itself be quenched, leaving the intellect tolerably (perhaps preternaturally) clear, and free to busy itself with its own proper concerns. And it is interesting further to observe that although the latter attitude of mind is displayed under a variety of circumstances, it seems always due to some powerful excitation of feeling which feeds upon that reserve stock or surplusage

of strength latent even in the weakest frame, but ready to give way again in collapse as soon as the tension of the moment is passed. If we are to believe tradition, the awfulness of the situation seemed to have nerved Tell's arm to aim his best ; and so also in the near presence of some dark crisis, as when a ship is sinking or a martyr is led to the stake, fear seems to be banished, and a terrible fate is met with a composure which appears nothing short of miraculous. When Dr. Livingstone, the famous African explorer, was struck down by a lion and death seemed imminent, he said he remembered looking up at the infuriated beast, and consciously contemplating the situation with a feeling of positive unconcern ! Perhaps this is partly to be explained if we reflect that the use of fear is to warn us of danger, and to bid us escape it ; but where all chance of escape is cut off and there is no alternative but to submit ; where—be it through physical necessity, or be it through some great effort of heroic resolve—*the situation is accepted*, the wild tumult of the will is hushed, by a spell which adds force to weakness and gives a new character to feeling.

But leaving this subtler question touching the machinery of mind, let us next observe that a weighty word still remains to be said respecting the chapter of accidents ; for judgment and discretion (and often too the practical recognition of moral obligation) is necessary if accidents are to be *prevented from happening*.

Some years ago the Theatre Royal at Exeter was consumed by fire, occasioning the loss of no less than one hundred and twenty-seven lives. From the report of Captain Shaw (the special commissioner sent down to assist the coroner) it transpired that the magistrates had licensed a building which was for many reasons,—twelve were specified—not at all fit to have been licensed.

In the wording of the report, "any one of these defects of construction should have prevented the licensing of the building as a theatre," and what took place—*i.e.* the course of the fire and the consequent loss of life—must have been quite well understood as being within the range of probability. "The lessons and warnings of recent years," to quote again from the report, "had prepared all concerned for the terrible catastrophe precisely as it actually occurred."

In the winter of 1881 a gigantic catastrophe, causing a perfect holocaust of life, occurred by the burning of the Ring Theatre in Vienna. From the investigations of a committee of inquiry it turned out that some oil lamps—appointed for the express purpose of safety in case a fire should break out and the gas be turned off at the meter—were out of repair, and had not been in their proper place for some little time. Now had these lamps been in use as they ought to have been, loss of life would probably still have occurred, but it can be asserted with confidence that numbers, perhaps hundreds, of innocent and unsuspecting persons would have been spared an untimely and shocking death.

Observe now an oversight of a different kind. At the Colosseum Music Hall in Liverpool there was a pillar at the foot of a flight of steps which led up from the main entrance. Once, during a crowded performance at this hall, a false alarm of fire was raised, the people rushed out, and after the rush was over the bodies of thirty-seven persons were found heaped around this ill-placed pillar.

But it is the black catalogue of railway casualties which most amply illustrates the fearful consequences of this class of errors of judgment—or perhaps better said; its wilful perversion.

To facilitate the quick running of excursion trains at the Doncaster races, the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire railway company once committed the indiscretion of suspending the "block" system on their line. The consequence was that an express dashed into a Midland excursion train, which had drawn up at Hexthorpe to take tickets, killing twenty-five persons outright, and injuring more or less seriously many others. Nor was this error in railway tactics (by the said removal of the ordinary precautions of railway traffic) alone answerable for this deplorable affair, for it transpired that the engine of the express was not provided with a proper "vacuum" brake—it was, that is to say, a "simple" and not an "automatic" brake; and this did not effectually scotch the express, but allowed it to strike the stationary train a second time, thus augmenting disaster and dismay. But the sum of culpability does not end here, for, marvellous to say, it was this selfsame faulty brake which was largely responsible for a collision which had occurred but a short time previously, where one train ran, almost at full speed, into another when rounding the sharp curve at Penistone. Again at the Abbot-Ripton accident—where a collision had taken place, and the approaching Leeds express could not pull up, but was still running at the rate of nearly twenty miles an hour when it dashed into the wreck—it was clearly proved that the Great Northern authorities had failed to provide that engine with a suitable brake, such as they themselves had affirmed (at the Darlington Show) to be necessary to safety.

At five o'clock on the evening of a stormy day in January, 1880, a heavily-laden passenger train drew up at the last station before passing over the Tay estuary viaduct. So high was the wind and so boisterous the

waves that the pointsman, whose duty it was to run the train on to the bridge, hesitated to do so. That there was always some feeling of insecurity under these circumstances may be gathered from the fact that passengers were requested not to keep the carriage windows up while crossing the bridge, in order to diminish the resistance offered to the force of the wind. And on this fatal night several persons chose to alight at the station aforesaid, and be ferried across the straits, rather than incur the possible danger of the situation. In this state of matters one cannot but think it was a very grave error of judgment to run the train on the bridge. And so the event proved. For no sooner was the central arch reached than the structure gave way and, with its living freight, the train was precipitated into the waters beneath. Needless to say every passenger was either killed or drowned, and no less than sixty persons were thus miserably destroyed.

But why swell the tale of culpable inattention and lack of judgment—is not its name legion? The railway axles deceptively warranted sound when this is not the case, and fated to give way some frosty day and spread death and consternation around;—the slow heavy goods-train permitted to creep along in front of a flying express;—the incompetent brakes supplied to locomotive engines out of consideration for the pockets of directors and shareholders;—or again, the unseaworthy craft sent to sea in the interest of the underwriters at Lloyds;—such are instances of a culpable neglect which, owing probably to difficulty of detection, escapes the proper imputation of criminality which it so richly deserves.

“These things speak with the voice of thunder,” says a recent writer,\* “from every human being whose body

\* Richard Jefferies, in *The Story of my Heart*.

has been racked with pain, from every human being who has suffered from accident or disease ; from every human being drowned, burned or slain by negligence, there goes up a continually increasing cry louder than the thunder. . . . These miseries are your doing, because you have mind and thought, and could have prevented them. You can prevent them in the future. You do not even try."

What a commentary on this note of indignant protest is the appalling disaster which has occurred while we are penning these lines. At Conemaugh in Pennsylvania, a huge reservoir hung, a perpetual menace to the adjacent villages and towns dotted about the valley. Long ago the foundations of the dam,—which stood between fifty thousand souls and destruction,—were known to be giving way ; leakages were continually reported, till at last—it burst ; and then down came the water, sweeping through the valley a mighty torrent forty feet deep, obliterating at one fell stroke a dozen hamlets and towns ; while men, women and children, in their thousands, were consigned to an awful death by flood and flame—martyrs to the negligence and folly of those who did not do what they very well knew they ought to have done. "It is perfectly certain that all accidents are preventible ; there is not one which does not arise from culpable neglect. All accidents are crimes."

### III.—CASES IN LAW.

PERHAPS there is nothing more significant of the perils and pitfalls surrounding the course of human conduct than the mass of material which forms the staple of our law procedure. If anyone pay attention to the legal reports which appear in the daily papers he can hardly

fail to be impressed with the difficulty and danger attaching to motives, and the uncertainty of the construction which is placed upon them.

In illustration of this we may refer to a case which occurred a few years ago and excited no small interest at the time. This was a shipping disaster in which three men and a boy found themselves adrift in a small boat in mid-ocean, their ship, the *Mignonette*, having sunk before there was time to secure provisions. Day after day passed but not a sail appeared in sight, and the certainty of death began to stare them in the face. Under these circumstances the desperate thought suggested itself that someone should be sacrificed for the sake of the others ; and since the boy was already in a state of collapse and his end evidently near, the men decided to take the lad's life to save their own. Into the shocking details of this plan we need not enter ; suffice it to say it was carried into execution, and by this means life was prolonged till a passing vessel rescued the men, who were discovered in the lowest state of prostration.

Now what, we may pause to ask, could be the considerations which would weigh in coming to so fearful a conclusion ? They would seem to have been somewhat as follows :—as to the certainty of the boy's demise if nature had been left to take its course ; as to the certainty (so far as could be seen) of all perishing if the lad's life was not sacrificed, and as to the value of the lives to be saved—the men having wives and families.

That this was a case of deliberate homicide admits of no question. Of this the perpetrators of the deed were perfectly aware ; and consequently on landing at Falmouth they voluntarily and straightway gave themselves

up to justice, in the full belief that their extremity would be accounted an excuse for the crime they had committed.

Now there is only one situation—(penal and military considerations apart)—where a man is held by English law to be justified in taking the life of another, and that is when he conceives his life to be in danger from that other. As Sir William Blackstone says, “in such a case he is permitted to kill the assailant, for then the law of nature and self-defence, its primary canon, have made him his own protector ;”—an admission, this, on the part of an eminent legal authority, that circumstances do, in one situation at least, justify a man in taking the law into his own hands. But, of course, nothing of the kind was applicable in the case in question ; so that there could be no doubt that in slaying this unoffending lad these three men were, in point of law, guilty of wilful murder. Now the penalty for this is capital punishment ; yet these men were not hanged, and though tried and found guilty, the recommendations to the mercy of the Crown were so strong that their lives were not only spared but the sentence passed was merely nominal,—was such, in short, as to justify the contention that necessity may be pleaded in extenuation of wrong-doing. It should be added that the persons in question were, all three, respectable, God-fearing men. It is evident, furthermore, that in giving themselves in custody they did so with a clear conscience, and in the full persuasion that the rigour of the law would not be meted out to them. Had it been otherwise—if, that is to say, these men had not been conscious of the purity of their motive, but had been, instead, a prey to heart’s misgivings—can it be imagined they would have been so ready to turn informers against themselves ?—the thing could have been

kept dark ; there was no one else there to see what happened.

The above case, let us remark in passing, may be instructively compared with the story of Eugene Aram. In both cases an opportunity presented itself of profiting at the expense of another's life, and in both cases a capital crime was committed, with a motive which was supposed to justify the act. But mark the difference as regards the internal verdict of conscience. While the spirit of Eugene Aram was harrowed and bowed down under a sense of guilt, the crew of the *Mignonette* were so innocent of any such feeling that they could freely make a full confession and fearlessly challenge the verdict of public opinion.

A curious light is thrown upon the relation between morality and law—(or rather the relation between public morality and law on the one hand, and the promptings of the individual judgment on the other)—by cases like the one just mentioned. For it is plain it would never do that these cases of exceptional difficulty should be promoted to the rank of principle and precedent. To admit the plea of special need or necessity as an excuse for misdeeds *on principle* were most seriously to relax the fibre of public morals. One may well ask with Lord Coleridge, in summing up in the *Mignonette* case : “Who is to be the judge of this sort of necessity ? By what measure is comparative value of lives to be measured ? Is it to be strength, or intellect, or what ? It is plain that the principle leaves to him who is to profit by it to determine the necessity which shall justify him in deliberately taking another's life to save his own.” And in a leader on the same subject the *Times* made the following comment : “Miners who are walled up in a subterranean gallery

with no food or water devour in the agony of hunger candle-ends and even the soles of their boots and then die heroically ; and the records of war are rarely tarnished with horrors such as those of which the crew of the *Mignonette* were guilty."

These considerations notwithstanding, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the virtual sentence which the law passed in this case was in agreement with the internal sanction of conscience.

But it is not always so. There is not always this accord between the internal and the external tribunal ; and men have not unfrequently been punishable by the law of the land when there would seem to have been no felt stain upon the conscience. Such happened, for instance, in a case of considerable general interest since it had to do with the mode in which persons who are deemed insane can be confined under an order of the magistrates. In the case in question an order for removing an individual to a lunatic asylum was contested on the grounds of an insufficient and perfunctory examination. Mr. Justice Grove, who gave judgment in the case, while according to the magistrates full credit for having done what they conceived to be their duty, seems to have had no doubt that they were by no means free from blame in the eye of the law, and this, considering the extreme gravity of the situation as touching the public interest, was certainly no light matter. "I have come to the conclusion," said the judge, referring to the question whether the examination was such as satisfied the requirements of the statute, "I have come to the conclusion, I own not without regret, as the magistrates had done nothing morally wrong, but thought they were doing their duty, that it was not so." Now this shows a curious

discrepancy between what is *morally* and what is *legally* wrong.

The same thing is seen again in the following instance, which was a notorious case of ill-treatment of a child by its mother, to which the father was privy. The learned judge remarked that "what the wife did in the presence or with the knowledge of the husband must be taken as done with his sanction or assent; and if he knew of the ill-treatment and did not object to it, and allowed it, then he would be *as guilty* in point of law, and *nearly as guilty* morally, as his wife."

Now it may be held that the verdict in the *Mignonette* case is a powerful proof of the weight attaching to motives even in criminal law, and even where the charge is a capital one. This discrimination as to motive was conspicuous in a certain case of baby-farming and infanticide, in which Mr. Baron Huddleston expressed his conviction that "although it was probable the parents had wished to get the child put out to nurse he did not think the evidence showed they intended to do with it *what was evidently in Long's mind*. With regard to Long (by whom the child was destroyed) his case was a most serious one. He (Mr. Baron Huddleston) was perfectly satisfied that the *idea in Long's mind* was that he should get the child and that either he or Barnard should kill the child before it was thrown into the water, or, at all events, that it should be thrown into the water. That was a very bad case of soliciting to commit murder, and as he must, in the interest of society, make an example of him, he sentenced Long to eight years' penal servitude."

Contrast now with the foregoing the words used by Mr. Poland, the coroner, in instructing the jury in

another case of wilful murder. "The jury must not be led away," said he, "by any suggestion that in this case no adequate motive was shown for the commission of such a crime by the prisoner. In many crimes of violence it was impossible to get at the true motive ; but motive was immaterial (!). What was material was to ascertain from a careful investigation what the facts were, and whether the accused did or did not commit the act charged in the indictment."

Now this was a case known as the "Uxbridge murder case," which, at the time, made a painful impression on the popular mind, since a woman was sentenced to death for killing her husband, without a particle of direct proof, and without the shadow of assignable motive—the case turning on the position of certain gunshot wounds, about which, however, there was a lively difference of opinion as to whether they could or could not have been inflicted by the deceased himself.

Commenting on the unsatisfactory state of legal procedure as illustrated in this case, a correspondent to one of the daily papers wrote as follows : "The prisoner at the bar was the only person who could explain how these wounds were caused. Her mouth is shut by law. Yet by the same law statements made by her in terror at the time, and made to detectives, who could ask no crucial questions, are read as evidence against her in a matter of life and death. We have only to suppose a frantic struggle between man and wife for the possession of the loaded pistol after the man had fired a shot or had threatened suicide to account for all the wounds wherever placed. The possibilities of such a struggle cannot be gauged by any amount of expert evidence. But could the woman have been asked by the judge, as she

would have been in France, how these wounds happened, she would either have convicted herself or have explained the whole thing."

To confine judgment at law to circumstantial evidence alone, exclusive of considerations of motive, seems a very perfunctory, not to say illogical, mode of handling the subject. Many cases, indeed, just turn upon a question of motive, as, for instance, one of the numerous "Weldon" suits, in which the point was, whether in proposing Mrs. Weldon as an inmate of his asylum, a certain medical man "had acted as an honest man, or whether he was influenced by *indirect motives*, and the object of personal advantage."

At the same time, it requires to be borne in mind that as soon as personal conduct has so far exceeded the proper bounds of individual action that it comes into collision with the public interest, and falls accordingly under the cognizance of public law, it has already entered a stage in which other than purely personal considerations carry weight. That the sentence passed on the man who shoots another should vary in severity according to the consequences of the act and not according to the motive which led to the act—when, for instance, a man fires with intent to kill, but the ball does not happen to pierce a fatal spot, and the culprit escapes therefore the extreme penalty of the law—would seem a perversion of even-handed justice if we confine our attention to the subjective aspect of the case; from another point of view, however, the consequences of the act become the chief consideration. Whatever the assailant's intentions may have been in attacking a fellow creature, it is not immaterial to the state whether or no it is deprived of a citizen thereby. Personal and public interests are not always coincident, and many a

life has fallen a victim to private pique, which the state could ill spare.

There is no doubt, however, that the administration of the law might be brought into closer unison with the internal tribunal of private judgment. The painful discrepancy referred to appears with telling effect in the following letter to the editor of the *Times* :—

“ Sir,—In the *Times* of to-day I read a report of proceedings at the Central Criminal Court which strikes me with surprise. Five men set upon one woman in Christian Street (appropriate name), and a woman passing cried ‘Shame.’ The five men turned upon her, and though she took refuge in a shop, she was thrown down and jumped upon. The owner of the shop, also a woman, threatened the assailants with a poker, on which the prisoner, one of these men, took the poker out of her hand and struck her a blow on the head from which she died two days after. Having been found guilty, he was again indicted with one of his companions of the first and second assaults for the second assault—that on the woman who cried ‘Shame.’ For these assaults, having been recommended to mercy on the ground of his good character, Sir William Charley sentenced him to ten months’ hard labour, his companion getting four months only. Immediately after two men and a woman were indicted for stealing some linen from the employer of one of them, a linendraper at Sheffield. Sir William Charley sentenced them to five years’ penal servitude. It appears, therefore, that we may jump upon one woman and kill another for one-sixth, or jump upon a woman solely for one-fifteenth the term of imprisonment which we shall have to suffer if we steal a tablecover and do no violence to anybody.—I am, Sir, yours to command,

“ BILL STILES.”

As touching flagrant disproportion of sentences the following cases may also be contrasted :—(1) “ At the Dartford Petty Sessions, George Parish was charged with stealing five pieces of wood belonging to William Moore, at Farningham. The evidence went to show that the prisoner, who was of respectable appearance and character, had been in search of work, and, being promised a job at Farningham, encamped on a green there and lighted a fire with which to cook some food. He took five pieces of wood from a field belonging to Mr. Moore to replenish the fire, and this was the charge preferred. The Chairman (Mr. S. C. Umfreville) sentenced the

prisoner to *six weeks' hard labour*, and refused to entertain the petition of the prisoner for leniency on the ground that employment had been promised him." (2) "At Preston, John Brocklebank, a fish dealer, was charged with violently assaulting a widow named Mary Turner. The complainant stated that at ten o'clock on Tuesday night the prisoner went to her house and persisted, as he had done previously, in wishing to keep company with her. She refused to have anything to do with him, and upon requesting him to leave her house, the prisoner locked himself inside and commenced a brutal attack upon her. He kicked her in the face, which was shockingly mutilated; and she further stated that her body was covered with bruises, all the result of kicks. The magistrates considered it a most serious and brutal assault, and as kicking was still so common, and they were trying to put it down, the prisoner would be committed to gaol for *two months*."

Miss Frances Power Cobbe urges the same commonsense plea in a letter written to the *Times* in connection with the Uxbridge case already alluded to, in which she says: "Most persons, I imagine, have thought, as I have done, that to constitute murder there must be some forethought, some previous malicious intent. In a painful study I once made of cases of wife-torture and wife-killing in England I found that even when a husband had been known to declare repeatedly that he would 'do for' his wife, the verdict against him was only manslaughter when he finally kicked her to death or threw her on the fire, because there were such *circumstances attenuantes*, as, e.g., that he had come home 'in liquor,' and had been 'provoked by finding no supper ready.'"

The painful anxiety and suspense which followed the

trial of the "Penge" case will be within the recollection of most readers. Many think (and their view is confirmed by the opinion of the faculty) that the evidence of the cause of death in this case was scientifically erroneous ; that all these unhappy people—there were four persons condemned to death ; one was pardoned, while the other three served various terms of penal servitude—were innocent of the charge imputed. And, again, in the "Poole" case, in which a convict for perjury was sentenced to penal servitude for seven years, there were many persons who were persuaded, and would undertake to show, that the prisoner ought not to have been convicted at all.

Errors of judgment, like accidents, will, to be sure, occur ; but considering the injury to the individual sometimes occasioned by a miscarriage of justice, as well as its unsettling effect on the public mind, one can scarcely accept this as an excuse on the part of those who are answerable for such things.

#### IV.—ENTHUSIASM—BIAS—PARTICULARITY—TIMELINESS.

AND now as to certain general requirements which are necessary in arriving at just conclusions. Let us first remark that *advocacy* is proverbially not fair. That is to say, one would not expect an unbiassed judgment concerning something in which a man takes a very strong personal interest, and which he is, as it were, pledged to support. One would hardly appeal to Mr. Irving for an opinion as to whether it is right or wrong to go to the play,\* nor would he who had

\* The Young Men's Christian Association wrote to Mr. Irving for his opinion as to whether "Christians should go to the theatre." Now this was something like appealing to a bishop for his views on *going to church*.

scruples against bearing arms find Viscount Wolseley exactly the right person to consult on the matter. Such a course of action would appear as ill-judged as it would be to attach weight to the word of a tradesman who is loud in praise of his wares—to buy a horse, for instance, solely on the recommendation of the horse-dealer, and without making further inquiries.

The candidate for knowledge would, however, be proceeding in an equally imprudent manner were he to omit consulting the opinion of those who are the recognized masters in their several departments. That Mr. Ruskin is a notable example of the impassioned fine-art enthusiast, and Professor Huxley a veritable high priest of certain branches of natural science, will not be denied; yet he who desires to inform his mind on these matters will do well to acquaint himself with the views of such high authorities—*In sua arte sibi cuique credendum est.*

To form a just estimate of Assyrian exploration a knowledge of the labours of a Rawlinson or a Layard is necessary, and no one is competent to hold an opinion on Secularism who has not studied the views of Bradlaugh and Holyoake, or on homœopathy, if he rest satisfied with the version of those medical men who have refused to investigate this subject.

But this notwithstanding, and while accounting enthusiasm a powerful instrument for usefulness—an indispensable leverage for all that is thorough in the works and ways of mankind—one must not be unmindful of the cramping effect which is the natural result of busying oneself with any particular employment or pursuit.

In either case there would be so powerful a bias as practically to prejudge the question and therefore reduce the value of the opinion given to nil.

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Specialism tends to contract the understanding, and to limit the intellectual grasp. To be deep in any particular subject disqualifies for a comprehensive view—(human judgments, like rivers, are either deep and narrow, or broad and shallow)—and that, too, not only in respect to other matters, but even as regards that which is the special object of attention. If the mind be preoccupied it cannot truly perceive. Pain, if unattended to, is not felt; and conversely, feeling, by the abnormal concentration of mental power, can be stimulated far beyond the proper action of its source and object. If one walks out on a bright winter's day when snow is lying on the ground, and stares intently at the sun for a minute or two, the sun's image will be so stamped upon the retina that, wherever the gaze may now be directed on the white surface around, a number of bright spots will appear, at first green and then changing to purple. Is not this typical of the *homo unius libri*, the devotee of science, the fanatic in religion? And observe what this optical "after-image" really means—it implies nothing less than a temporary derangement of the organ of vision. So also with the eye of the mind. Things are not seen in their true light, but always with a certain special colouring. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that in proportion as a man develops proficiency in his special pursuit or vocation does he thereby become less competent to estimate it at its proper value. It is not merely that the field of inward vision is already so largely occupied as to leave little room for other objects, but that by means of this very *crowding-out* the relativity and just proportion of things is lost, and hence judgment is impaired—much in the same way as occurs in the delusions of a dream.

Illustrations of this truth will occur to every one. The musician may go into raptures over the execution of some difficult piece of music, which if tested by general sentiments of taste and beauty may be considered by no means so very pleasing or praiseworthy. Nor is it always the artist who makes the best art critic. A man may know very well how things ought to look without having a notion of the practical requirements necessary to produce the desired effect. Items of a *menu* may be critically discussed by the *gourmet*, and his opinion carry weight, although he knows nothing whatever of the culinary art. And the very homeliness of the last illustration may serve the better to express the relation between criticism and labour here meant—to indicate the truth, namely, that while all practical concerns are carried on for the sake of some definite aim which constitutes the end in view, it is with this end or object that criticism has to do. And the relationship in question is of the most intimate kind. In the above example, for instance, let the skill of the cook be never so great it is still subordinate to the end in view; the main thing is that the viands be rendered palatable—and here comes in the function of the critic.

Then, again, how potent is the influence of habit, or continued custom in determining the likings and judgments of men. Thus, while the associations of the dissecting-room and operating-table may be invested with a pleasing interest to members of the faculty, such matters would be justly regarded with aversion by those in whom the professional bias is wanting. To persons, again, who have little to do with children the concerns of the little folk are not generally a matter of absorbing interest, but let a man become a father, and

he will begin to take quite a *personal* interest in such things as tops and kites and dolls.\*

Now it is just in these conflicting functions of advocate and judge that the problem of a right management of the judgment really lies. To judge fairly and impartially a certain openness and disengagement of the mind—a mental posture which shall sit loose to the empirical and special—is extremely desirable. And yet how difficult it is to preserve this judicial frame of mind amidst the pressure and manifold distraction of actual life. For the only guarantee of success in carrying through anything whatever is that we should summon all available energy for that particular purpose—that we should, in a sense, be blind to other influences, deaf to other considerations. It is only so that a man will stick to anything at all. And then, again, the human mind is not a machine, that it can stop at a moment's notice and at a particular spot. The force of enthusiasm necessary to carry through some important matter causes the pendulum to swing too far, the impetus of feeling carries it past the point where we ought to stop—the point beyond which the dictates of a sound judgment become obscured and strained.

But the fact is, bias or predilection is itself determined by the very make or constitution of the individual, his idiosyncrasy or peculiarity; as also by the environment in which he moves, is itself contingent

\* Here is a striking instance of the blunting effect of habituation, for which we are indebted to Miss Frances Power Cobbe. “A party of English people went to the Bull Ring at San Sebastian. When the first horse was ripped up and his entrails trailed on the ground, a young lady of the party burst into tears and insisted on going away. Her brothers compelled her to remain; and a number of horses were then mutilated and killed before her eyes. Long before the end of the spectacle the girl was as excited and delighted as any Spaniard in the assembly.”

on the condition of things within as well as the condition of things without. There is a *collocation* of circumstances in human life as in all affairs of earth.

Let some village swain who hails far from the hubbub of great cities take his stand at an important junction of railway traffic when the express is due. With what unmeasured feelings of wonder, not unmixed with awe, will he behold the modern leviathan which appears to career so wildly through that maze of railway tracks. But the feeling is diminished when it is observed that the monster is most rigorously tied down to one particular appointed path ; and let the glory of its speed and power be never so great, yet must it most implicitly obey the leading of that rigid line. Is it not somewhat so with the limitations of knowledge and the verities of actual life ? “ What wonderful things are events,” says Disraeli in one of his novels ; “ the least one of greater importance than the most sublime and comprehensive speculations.” How lightly does imagination float amid the possibilities of the future ; but how different from this is the actual *lie* of things. Our life is tied down to fact ; laid down in some particular groove—prepared by ancestry and circumstances of place and time—a groove in which the wheels of thought and action must of necessity run. But if fancy’s forms be fair, and life’s prose unlovely in comparison, shall not wisdom recall us to our senses, and demonstrate in unmistakable terms the difference in value between fact and fiction ?

Now fact means *particularity*. Everything is fashioned, shaped, and coloured in some particular way, and in no other ; moreover the actualization of anything means a limitation, and partial negation of the

truth,\* and in this limitation our thought also participates. We have spoken of the negation implied in nature ; we have also, in another place,† referred to the fact that any object which comes within our cognizance is known to us as *object-mecum*. But a little reflection suffices to show that the *me* of this compound is, in reality, a negation of the object ; our personal consciousness tells us that the *me = not object*, and the *object = not me*.

Those very faculties by which we lay hold of the objects of external perception, and by means of which they are transmuted into knowledge, do, in effect, invest them with something borrowed from ourselves :—

“The clouds that gather round the setting sun  
Do take a sober colouring from an eye  
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.”

And in proportion as this is so—in proportion as feeling participates in the exercise of the judgment—are our perceptions apt to become blurred and dim. We are, in fact, blinded by ourselves ; the light of the intellect and the glow of the feelings are two kinds of fire which do not go well together. An illustration of this may be drawn from the giving of evidence in courts of law. The witness who is agitated with emotion is not so likely to render an accurate account of matters of fact

\* This deviation of the particular instance from the general rule—the actual fact falling short of the fulness of the principle or type—is exemplified in the practice of physic, an art which is so largely empirical. Medical treatment is oftentimes guided not so much by what drugs ought to do, as by what they are *seen* to do. The physician must be willing not to meddle with a course of treatment which is doing good although this may be running counter to all precedent and precept. On the other hand he must have the courage to refrain from physicking his patients—however urgent the case—if there is no plain indication as to what drug should be given ; remembering that it is only in *undrugged* cases that it can be ascertained what nature (*the vis medicatrix nature*)—which is after all the best physician—can do for the disease.

† See “Signification and Principles of Art,” part iii., cap. iii.

as he who keeps cool and collected ; and precisely inasmuch as feeling has distorted the image figured on his mental retina will the representations of such an one be *misrepresentations*.

Very noticeable is this projection of the subjective element or personality of the observer in works of art. The artist leaves his stamp upon his work in such a way that it acquires a twofold significance, and becomes a representation not only of the object but also of himself. "Try as he may do to escape from the conditions under which he labours he will find that he does not make things as they are, but as they exist for his consciousness."

But if this subtle process of transmutation is permissible in art, it is certainly most detrimental to the judicial functions of the mind ; and however laudable it may be for men to throw themselves, heart and soul, into some good cause, it is not from the leader of faction that we can look for an opinion free from bias. The political partisan may play the cool critic, but, professions to the contrary notwithstanding, it is inevitable that his enthusiasm shall befool his judgment. How seldom it is that party men will confess themselves in the wrong. For years Mr. Gladstone defended his Egyptian policy step by step from the bombardment of Alexandria, and, in spite of the crushing verdict of events, persistently denied that any mistake had ever been made in this miserable tissue of blunder and misfortune ; nor was it till the autumn of '85, when he was out of place, and catering once more for votes, that an admission of error was wrung from him. Now this is to put the case pretty strongly, for he must be prejudiced indeed who does not recognize Mr. Gladstone's many and shining personal virtues.

Among those statesmen who have guided its desti-

nies, the history of English politics presents, perhaps, only one character remarkable for this rare candour. Three times did Sir Robert Peel change his mind on great questions of the day—and it was well he did so, for they were matters of vital importance to the country. Hence we have the curious spectacle of the great Tory leader initiating three of the most democratic measures in British politics—Reform, Repeal, and Catholic Emancipation ; one of which alone, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, was of such tremendous significance “as to be fraught with perhaps wider consequences to the world than the French Revolution of 1789.” \*

But where party-spirit runs high, argument is apt to lose itself in invective and rancour ; where men are struggling for place and power appeals to prejudice aided by every rhetorical device are employed without scruple, while questions of vast and dangerous import are raised for the sake of uniting a party or overthrowing a cabinet. When, in the electoral campaign of 1881, Sir William Harcourt declared, “Conservatism wields a blood-red banner, which means war, taxation, poverty, and disgrace,” and when Lord Granville stooped to use the expression “gunpowder and glory” to designate the policy of his opponents, we were listening to the language of poetry and passion—a kind of language which is calculated to inflame the heart, not to inform the mind. Party cries act like a talisman ; their appeal is not to reason ; they throw dust in the eyes of the unwary, and marshal the ranks of unthinking enthusiasm. But this does not help—contrariwise, it hinders, and that most seriously—the sober business of the judgment.

\* The opinion of that keen political observer Count Vitzthum, recorded in his *Mémoires*.

When Professor Crookes, a scientist of the first water, undertook to investigate the claims of Spiritualism, an instructive example was afforded of a foregone conclusion. "Now," said the critics, "we shall see what Spiritualism is worth." But after the investigation was over, with a result which turned out contrary to expectation—since it ended not in the discomfiture of Spiritualism, but in the Professor becoming a convert—our critics changed their tone and not their preconceived opinion. Now, whatever the general merits of the case may have been, it is evident that by these persons the question had been judged beforehand.

But the value of opinions, political, social and religious, cannot be properly estimated apart from their collocation—apart from the complexion of affairs as they actually exist. Gunpowder is not dangerous if no fire be applied, and poison will not kill if it be not assimilated into the system. The truth of actual experience is one thing; the truth of far-reaching aims, which are to find their realization in the remote future, may be a very different matter indeed. What is *best* is not always practicable, or, in other words, *best for the time being*; efforts which are misplaced and ill-timed, however well-meant they may be, are often mischievous and only aggravate the conditions they are intended to ameliorate. Hence the great importance of *timeliness* in all concerns where it is necessary to act with judgment and circumspection. It is no use to invite the poor and destitute to attend lectures and Gospel addresses if they are famishing for want of food. Let them first sit down to a hearty meal and they will then listen with pleasure and profit. Whenever an increase of personal freedom within the body politic is in question, the great point is—are people ripe for it? "I have often tried to per-

suade people," says Mr. Justice Stephen, "that it is impossible to say whether liberty is a good or a bad thing till we are told *who* is to be at liberty to *do what*." So also with that burning question—Is marriage a failure? It is impossible to say whether marriage is a good or a bad thing until we are told who are the contracting parties, and how they are proposing to live together. But (to return to matters of wider significance) it may be affirmed that the task of the social reformer would seem largely to consist in keeping the eye fixed upon the ideal best, while he, at the same time, recognizes how much or how little of this can be realized in the actual state of affairs.

Free thought, freedom of speech, the liberty of the press and a public opinion untrammelled by state censorship, all presuppose a condition of things in which the citizen has learnt to conduct himself with decency and decorum, and is therefore safe to be left to his own devices. But where men seek their ends, like the beasts of the forest, in some savage onslaught of outrage and murder; where printing-presses are found in association with bombs and other instruments of destruction, or where matter is printed and circulated of so impure a character as to constitute an offence against public chastity, repressive measures become necessary and are in place. True, there will never be wanting persons who are ready to justify enormities like these, but anything that can be said in their favour rests upon considerations of a remote and far-reaching character which treat the happiness and well-being of the present with a brutal indifference. Such was the argument of the Inquisition—it is also the argument for dynamite.

Whether measures are ill or well-timed is, however,

in itself a matter of opinion. The author of *Greater Britain* thought it was high time to shock the British public a year or two ago with his appalling revelations concerning the state of the national defences. He admitted that the unsettlement of mind occasioned thereby was regrettable, but that the disclosure was a necessary evil in the sense of leading, it was hoped, to better things. It is, we presume, with the same end in view that Professor Huxley continues to unsettle the public mind with his diatribes against popular religion ; or that Mrs. Josephine Butler deems the exposure of certain high-life scandals—with all its odious tale of bad morals and bad faith—is calculated to bring about a healthier tone in the long run, although it do grievously wound the moral sense of the community for the time being. “To judge rightly the time and its conditions is a great thing,” says Matthew Arnold in the preface to *Literature and Dogma* ;—a work which must, we think, have brought home to the truth-seeker in a very telling way the question as to whether an unsettlement of mind and a forsaking of the old ideals be or be not the *bettering* of himself.

V.—WHAT PLACE HAS SELF-INTEREST IN THE FORMATION OF JUDGMENTS ?—NATIONAL SELF-INTEREST OR PATRIOTISM—COMMERCIAL SELF-INTEREST IN TRADE.

THE mischievous effect which feeling may have upon the exercise of the judgment has been alluded to; we have also pointed out the importance of reckoning with things as they really are, and not as painted by speculation and fancy. Now there is nothing which enters more intimately into the scheme of actual life—or things as they really are—

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than the sentiment of self-interest. Nothing exerts a more powerful pressure on the individual than his own wants and wishes. Well, indeed, for the right conduct of life, if these importunate claimants would sometimes step aside and permit the logical faculties to pursue undisturbed "the even tenor of their way." But this cannot be ; the human mind is not a calculating machine ; it is impossible to separate the critical faculty from feeling ; embarrassing as they are, wants and wishes have to be reckoned with.

And indeed it would be to hit wide of the mark if we allowed the many faults of feeling to blind us to its necessary and legitimate use. A moment's consideration suffices to show that there are certain very important interests in life where it seems eminently right and proper that the individual should follow the bent of his desire. For instance, when the time comes for a youth to choose his vocation in life—to decide what he is going to be—it is important to find out what he would *like* to be ; for what he likes best he will probably do best. One lad is clever with his hands, another has a turn for figures, another a passion for soldiering or going to sea ; and parents, if they are wise, will make it a point to ascertain in which direction the boy's tastes run. Marriage, again, is another step in which the individual seems justified in consulting his wishes. Whoso goes a-wooing for any other reason than the affections of his heart is voted by common consent to be playing a part which scarcely redounds to his credit. It is true, love-matches do not always turn out a success ; nevertheless—and while holding that nature in her call to the nuptial tie has not taken into account (as indeed was not to be expected of her) the spiritual needs of man—one is at liberty to conclude that this same law

of nature has not greatly erred in placing that which chains a man to one woman, and to her alone, in the very core of his selfhood—for love stripped of its romance is nothing else than self-interest.

It is often said that a man's beliefs and opinions are not worth much so long as he is influenced by his inclinations. But those who hold that desire should have no place in the formation of opinion surely forget that it is a feeling of satisfaction and pleasure which gives the ultimate reason why one does anything whatever. Feeling is the initial starting-point of all action whatsoever, whether it be mental or physical. Volition without the impulse of wants and wishes would be as useless as a locomotive engine without steam, and the fatal tendency of man to take delight in evil things should not make us jump to the conclusion that all pleasure is necessarily bad. Nay, it is much rather right ; for, according to nature's plan, it is right conduct that has been associated with happiness, and wrong-doing with penalties and pains. Physical life itself—the very fact of animal existence in the normal state of health—is a delight, while discomfort is linked with abnormal states and the violation of law. That a feeling of satisfaction is the guide to every description of sound, consistent and healthy action, be it moral, be it intellectual, or be it physical, is the testimony of every human heart. What other internal test of conduct can there be for any sentient being ?

And yet one cannot indulge in reflections such as these without being quickly recalled by other considerations which seem to point to a very different conclusion. For no fact is more striking than the painful antithesis between the *like* and the *ought* of human conduct ; and one is inclined to think he must be a peculiar favourite

of fortune whose experience does not teach him that it is a rare coincidence when the path of pleasure is at the same time the path of duty. Since human nature is a composite, and too often an ill-compacted whole, it must needs be that the exercise of the judgment should be embarrassed by the clash of conflicting motives. To discuss self-interest is, consequently, to hark back to the discussion of a former page ; for when self-interest is in question it is necessary to ask what kind of self-interest is meant—do you mean interests of the higher and better, or of the lower and baser self? It is in the interest of a thief to steal my purse, it is in my interest to keep it ; but there can be no question as to the difference in motive in the two cases ; it is the difference which leads us to discriminate between desires which are, and desires which are not, legitimate. A failure to bear in mind this dual character of the nature of man robs principle of all its cogency and force. When it is said, for instance, that happiness is the test of conduct (or, in plain words, that he who is good will be happy), the general assertion might easily be disproved as a matter of fact in particular cases. To take a common example. Some people are extremely touchy about their personal appearance : now this is no crime ; it may even be called a “weakness” ; yet it gives a handle to vanity and pride, and cannot therefore meet with the full approval of conscience. But will it be denied that anything which panders to this self-indulgence contributes materially to the comfort and good humour of such persons, and that to withdraw the means of gratifying the same will make them miserable and cross ? Yet this would seem the very reversal of the above maxim until it be remembered that when we give expression to a truth like this we do, in reality, make tacit reference

to that better self which is, in fact, the *real* self, and gives the true measure of a man.

But if through the warring elements of man's double and divided nature duty and the right are so frequently associated with the thing one *does not like*, one need not on that account (let us once more repeat) fall into the Puritanical error of banishing gaiety and mirth and giving all pleasure a bad name ; blame should be ascribed not to the pleasure, but to the unworthy self which can take delight in wrong things. A man indulges, for instance, in wine or some favourite dish, in spite of the headache or fit of indigestion which he knows will follow. Now if there is here a balancing of pleasures and pains, it is no less evident that there is also the triumph of the lower over the higher motive, of sense over reason. Or to put the matter in a still more forcible light—suppose two drowning men struggling for a plank ; if one of them waives his right to the means of escape in favour of the other, he may be fulfilling the highest law of his being—that law which prompts to deeds of heroism, and discovers to men that there are things dearer even than life—but he will, nevertheless, be acting counter to that other law which impels every living creature to struggle with all its might for continued existence.

Consider now another species of self-interest, and one which is accounted a perfectly legitimate and laudable motive to action—we allude to national self-interest or *patriotism*. But will anyone deny that this sentiment implies prejudice and pride and pluming oneself at the expense of others ? What Englishman is there whose heart does not kindle at the thought of Trafalgar and Waterloo ! But can we indulge these patriotic feelings in any way which does not, to a certain extent, imply a

*hatred of the foe?* “Cosmopolitan politicians, who are friends of every country but their own, call our policy selfish—it is as selfish as patriotism,” said Disraeli on one occasion when repelling the censure of his political opponents—and we think he about hit the mark. Bismarck’s motto is, *My country, right or wrong*. And when we see Germany united and strong through the crippling of France; when we remember that England’s greatness rose—thanks to the unflagging zeal of the elder Pitt—upon the wreck of the maritime pretensions of Louis XIV.; when we call to mind also a similar rivalry of old, and the fierce animosity of the famous *Delenda est Carthago*, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that patriotism hides beneath the generous glow of its enthusiasm something which is conspicuously lacking in moral comeliness.

Now without denying the right of nations to make provision for their safety, it may be asserted with confidence that an appeal to arms is justifiable only in times of exceptional danger. For what does going to war mean but the “letting loose that beast within which should be chained up and made to cower before the creature of wider reason.” And if it be said this is a truism—that war is an evil which everyone deplores—it might be urged that the course of history does not by any means bear out this view. A study of the records of the past shows that men have been only too anxious to give full swing to their animal propensities, and be animated, as one might say, by the instincts of the bulldog and fighting-cock. Hear Nelson at the battle of Copenhagen: “A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters about, and he observed to one of his officers with a smile, ‘It is warm work, and this may be the last to any of us at any moment’; and then stopping

short at the gangway, added with emotion, ‘*But, mark you, I would not be elsewhere for thousands.*’”

Nor are such reflections applicable only to the blood-stained annals of the past. Events of the passing hour tell the same sorrowful tale. Do we not see a thorn placed in the side of Germany by the filching of the Alsatian provinces? And what could more impressively gauge the measure of this obliquity from the moral standard than the following uncompromising assertion : “France is our natural enemy for all time, and therefore her enfeeblement our business.” This is a passage from the diary of *Frederick the Noble*. What a sentiment for so amiable and high-minded a prince!

But such is the natural fruit of a policy of spoliation : conscience becomes confused, violence begets violence, and the tale of retribution knows no end.

And thus, to turn to a very different example of national appropriation, while all acknowledge the beneficence of British rule, we cannot forget that what has been won by the sword must be held by the sword, and that Russia, advancing as by the impulsion of gravitation, sunwards and seawards from the frozen north, hangs like an incubus on the gates of India. Nor is it improbable that the fate of the British Empire itself will one day be decided in the eastern seas.

Indeed the subject of British rule in India has for many years past been assuming the character of a “question”; and as such it is not without interest in the present connection. For in the first place, it is plain that there is here a case of coercion and subjection ;—if, that is to say, the natives were at liberty to choose for themselves they certainly would not tolerate a foreign yoke, mild and equitable though that yoke may be. It is plain also that England profits by this inferiority of

race, for all are agreed that the difficulty of holding India increases as education advances. When retiring from office in December, 1888, the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, declared that "the overwhelming mass of the people were still steeped in ignorance." Now let this state of things be improved and many think British ascendancy would be at an end. "The danger of educating the natives," says Sir Samuel Baker, "can hardly be over-estimated when we remember that we govern these multitudes entirely through our old prestige." There seems here, then, a direct conflict of interest and principle;—and the interest seems a vital one, for many, again, conceive the very existence of England, as a commercial power, to be at stake, so soon as her Indian possessions are in question.

But is material prosperity the highest aim of mankind, and are the interests of trade so sacred as to sanctify injustice and oppression?

Let us be careful to observe, however, that the exercise of the judgment does not consist in the enunciation of principles, nor yet in the assuring ourselves concerning them; it consists rather in grasping the gravity of the case, and duly estimating the actual *lie* of things. And hence it comes about that what at first sight has the aspect of being clearly wrong, may on further consideration turn out to be, contrariwise, not wrong but right. Let us see if this is not so in the present instance.

"It is not easy," says Professor Seeley, in his lectures on the *Expansion of England*, "to approve the conduct of those who built up Greater Britain, though there is plenty to admire in their achievements." And again, "The crimes" (involved in founding the British Empire) "are such as have been universal in colonization."

What! the British Empire founded in crime?—well we

may be very sure that if there has been wrong-doing it has borne, and probably does still bear, its own bitter fruit ; true felicity can never be purchased by a course of unprincipled action. To this immutable law there is no exception. As with nations, so also with individual men ; if a man sin the law of heredity, no less than the law of God, declares that his offspring shall not escape the consequences. But, for all that, the son does not immolate himself for the sins of his father. And so too with this national heritage : if our feelings of humanity are shocked by the way it was acquired, that is not to say we ought straightway to give it up. It might be that by so doing we should be only causing further mischief. Indeed the author just quoted puts the matter (as regards India, at any rate) in a very strong light, for he says : "It is impossible for the present to think of abandoning the task we have undertaken there. We might do so if our own interest alone were considered. Not that it would be easy, now that such a vast trade has grown up and such vast sums of English money, particularly in the latest years, have been invested in the country. But it would be possible. On the other hand, if we consider the interest of India, it appears wholly impossible. Much may be plausibly alleged against the system under which we govern India. It may be doubted whether it is altogether suited to the people, whether it is not needlessly expensive, and so forth. We may feel a reasonable anxiety as to what will come in the end of this unparalleled experiment. But I think it would be a very extreme view to deny that our government is better than any other which has existed in India since the Mussulman conquest. If it should ultimately fail more than any one imagines, we could never leave the country in a state half so de-

plorable as that in which we found it." \* And further, "to withdraw our government from a country which is dependent on it and which we have made incapable of depending on anything else would be the most inexcusable of all conceivable crimes and might possibly cause the most stupendous of all conceivable calamities." † From all which it appears that the present arrangement is, in the best sense, profitable to India ; and as it is also profitable to England the question of British ascendancy seems then to be one of those cases in which interest is on the side of duty.

But there are many forms of self-seeking. Wherever men club together for the sake of some common object of desire a class-interest is created in the furtherance of which motives of self-interest are called into play. If patriotism inspires the art of war, commerce—the art of peace—is actuated by motives not a whit less selfish.

It is the fashion in an industrial country like England to speak of war as a curse and a crime, and to laud commercial prosperity as if that were the highest goal of human endeavour. The declaration of a neighbouring potentate that he and his army were "born for each other," and his delight in contemplating men as so much "war material," has justly called forth expressions of reprobation and regret. But history plainly shows that trade owes its rise and establishment to nothing else than the assertion of brute force, and it must not be forgotten that the proud spectacle of a colonial empire which covers one-seventh of the land surface of the globe and numbers one-sixth of its inhabitants, is the outcome of many a bloody fray on land, or pirate cruise at sea. Trade was nurtured in violence and

\* Prof. Seeley's *Expansion of England*. 1885. p. 194.

† *Ibid* : p. 196.

wrested with force from contending rivals on the fighting principle—*my gain your loss*. So that it is hardly men of Lord Derby's stamp, who sneer at a policy of “glory and gunpowder,” that could have made the British Empire, nor is it exactly the fellow-countryman of William Pitt who can with propriety cry “hands off” to foreign Powers. “The expansion of England,” to quote from Professor Seeley's Rede lecture, “has taken place in four waves,” and “these waves have in all cases been the after-swell of a great war.” In the last century our rival was France; the century preceding, the Dutch; and before that, Spain.

But not alone in its fighting origin has trade given occasion for the display of the animal propensities in man—these baser qualities have also marred the meridian of its growth. The peaceful paths of industry have not been spared the ugly spectacle of superior strength tyrannizing over the defenceless and the weak. Nor is it necessary to recall the horrors of the slave trade in corroboration of this fact. Every employer of labour who overworks his “hands” for the sake of larger profits is setting at naught the moral law. Indeed, wherever men make it their practice to act in defiance of the moral law, occasion is given for cruelty and injustice, and this is met by retaliation and menace.

It is the same selfish principle of war—the same rivalry and contention, the same plotting and planning to gain at another's expense—is operative also in the transactions of trade. The scene of action may be changed, but the tactics remain the same. By sharp practice and fraud, by trickery and finesse, no effort is spared to overreach both customer and competitor. Surely many a man has been forced to the woeful conclusion that business could not be done on any other terms. Let

the following testimony speak for itself : “ From one brought up in his house, we have had the history of a draper, who, carrying his conscience into his shop, refused to commit the current frauds of the trade. He would not represent his goods as of better quality than they really were ; he would not say that patterns were just out, when they had been issued the previous season ; he would not warrant to wash well colours which he knew to be fugitive. Refraining from these and the like malpractices of his competitors, daily failing to sell various articles which his competitors would have sold by force of lying, his business was so unremunerative that he twice became bankrupt.” Then comes the miserable conflict of motives, the clashing of opposing interests :—the story continues, “ On all sides we have met with the same conviction, that for those engaged in the ordinary trades there are but two courses, either to adopt the practices of their competitors, or to give up business. Often, generally indeed, he (the tradesman) has to choose between two wrongs. He has tried to carry on his business with strict integrity ; he has sold none but genuine articles, and has given full measure. Others in the same business adulterate or otherwise delude, and are so able to undersell him. . . . An inspection of his books proves this alarming fact, that his diminishing returns will soon be insufficient to meet his engagements, and provide for his increasing family. What then must he do ? Must he continue his present course, stop payment, inflict heavy losses on his creditors, and with his wife and children turn out into the streets ? Or must he follow the example of his competitors, use their artifices, and give his customers the same apparent advantages. The last not only seems the least detrimental to himself, but also may be considered

the least detrimental to others. Moreover, the like is done by men regarded as respectable. Why should he ruin himself and family in trying to do better than his neighbours ? He will do as they do.” \*

VI.—THOUGHT—FEELING—ACTION—WHAT ARE OUR GUIDES TO CONDUCT ?

“Tho’ man a thinking being is defined,  
How few use the great prerogative of mind ;  
How few think justly of the thinking few,  
How many never think who think they do.”

WHAT is thought ? To think means, in logical parlance, to form ideas or notions about things, to make remarks about them, and to come to decisions or draw conclusions concerning them. But *to form*, *to make*, and *to draw* implies an active process. Thought implies then a mental *act*. Hence the terms by which we endeavour to express the workings of the mind are all borrowed from that which gives us our best idea of activity, and that is the movements of our bodily frame. Attention, perception, comprehension, all indicate a stretching forth of the “antennæ” of the mind in order to grasp some object of thought.

Man finds himself in a world of restless change. If he fix his eye on the distant landscape it changes under his gaze. Now it is bathed in sunlight, the next instant a passing cloud has wrought a new arrangement in light and shade. Stay, oh stay, that I may know thee and learn what thou art !—is man’s appeal to this passing show, this ever-shifting phantasmagoria which meets his eye. “*Wo fass’ ich dich unendliche Natur,*” cries Faust, in search of that steadyng and fixation, without

\* *Essays* by Herbert Spencer, vol. ii., pp. 125—126.

which there can be no true knowledge worth the name. So too, in man's intercourse with his fellow, spoken words fly off and leave no trace ; hence we fasten them down to the written page, for what is committed to writing abides and can be proved—is, so to say, a *talk which remains*, as the savage shrewdly remarked the first time writing was shown him.

Man's thought means then the grasping and detaining of the fugitive objects of sense for the sake of contemplation and comprehension. The lesser world of man's own nature is as a reflexion of the great world around him—both consist of a complex manifold, a web of confused material. Out of this web nature weaves the garment we know her by. The mind of man is also like a weaver's loom, and his will is the flying shuttle which—dividing this way and that—determines the fashion of his thought and knowledge. And yet, again, how unlike the noisy bustle of the loom is the still, quiet action of the mind ; for the grandest achievements of scientific inquiry have consisted in nothing so much, perhaps, as the patient observation of, and attention to, different strands of thought as they have risen into consciousness—in such gentle wise did the laws of Newton grow or the *Novum Organum* of Bacon.

For, truth to say, there is no such thing as *bonâ fide* creation or discovery in the operations of the mind. The functions of thought consist far more in making explicit that which is already latent in consciousness ; in awakening into animation the slumbering images of the soul. This is, in fact, the task of science ; the same may be said also of poetry and art : “ Like Faust, when he retires to his study at night, and the gay phantasмагoria of earth's beauty witnessed in the daytime, now rises again before the organ of inward vision, so imagi-

nation draws its inspiration from the visible world, and reminiscence is the foundation of all its creations.”\*

Thought is, then, a process and an art. The study of the scholar, the laboratory of the scientific inquirer, are thought's workshops, whence are turned out certain works of art—products, namely, of the *art of thinking*. Such are the visible results of that invisible kind of action we call *thought*; for do not let us suppose that action is a whit less real because it is silent and out of sight—brain-work, if less obvious, is no less real than the activity of hands and feet.

It has been observed, on a previous page, that a feeling of desire is the origin or *primum mobile* of every description of movement or activity manifested by sentient creatures. We may notice more particularly then in this place, what part feeling plays in the dynamics of thought. The two are certainly very dissimilar, for thought is an act or process which seems to go beyond the immediate impression given in sensation and feeling. Contrasted with the intense subjectivity of feeling, thought would seem to imply a certain *remove* from the core and centre of our being: it is like the *re-action* on our part resulting from the action upon us of the world in which we live; something going beyond the *what*, something which implies in the first place *that*—(I know *that* I am affected or influenced), then the *how*, and then the *why* and *wherefore*—leading to further inquiry and explanation. Hence we recognize the active character of thought as a movement or proceeding from within outwards, a movement directed *away* from self—playing upon its object forgetful of self—just as the eye takes no cognizance of itself, but is wholly occupied with visible things. And if the movements of thought

\* *Signification and Principles of Art*, by the Author, p. 121.

implied in explanation and description have an object or goal in view—a *terminus ad quem*—they have also (as is plain from the very terms themselves) a starting-point or initial centre of action—a *terminus a quo*; and so we come back to feeling, for it is feeling which sets the apparatus of thought a-going, and prompts its every movement.

But the function of feeling does not end here. If it is efficient in arousing our active powers, it also guides the development of their appointed tasks. Feeling, thought, and action—these three—are inseparably linked together; as a man feels so will he think, and as he thinks so will he act—unless, indeed, he has something to gain by concealment.

And now we begin to see the relevancy of this psychological digression to the immediate topic in hand. For it is plain that in every universe of action there is a right and a wrong way of acting; in reference, therefore, to every kind of action there exists a certain criterion or standard, a certain law or *logos*, by means of which we may gauge the movement in question. The drift of the foregoing remarks leads then to the query, What are these principles of action, these guides to conduct? The channels of human activity are many and various, what is the guarantee that men shall act with judgment and discretion?

Clearly there is no guarantee save what human sentiment suggests. The ultimate court of appeal which tells us what is right, proper, and expedient to do or to think can reside nowhere else than in the human breast itself. And the machinery of this court of appeal is none other than the exercise of those faculties which, under the designation of *taste*, *tact*, *judgment*, and the *sense of moral consciousness*, are commonly recognized as our guides to action. Nor is the operation of these faculties

solely confined to the individual, but—reflected from the narrow focus of private interest—it reappears in the wider circuit of the social organism, to take shape in enactments and statutes of the law, in doctrines and canons of the Church, in rules of social custom and convenience, in principles of literary or fine-art criticism, and in all those advices and precepts which are formulated in every case where men act together for the common weal.

Since, however, there is always a danger that conscience should abdicate in favour of public opinion, it is important that the present inquiry should not lose itself in general considerations, but should be studiously confined to the practical issues of individual belief and action—those matters which are experienced in *propria personā*. For every one knows that if there is to be any personal credit attaching to thought or word or deed, it is in so far as these are the creatures of his own brain, his own conscience, and his own bodily powers.

Now the exercise of the individual judgment in forming opinion and shaping conduct means the application of a man's feeling, intelligence, and will to the facts of experience which happen to be his. These are his data, his stock-in-trade—these are the stuff out of which character and creed are wrought. "We are in a world of facts and we use them, for there is nothing else to use."

It is plain, then, that belief and conduct are largely contingent on circumstances, and the difficulty of forming right judgments consists in the fact that these circumstances are always changing; so that it is impossible to take refuge in precedent as an unfailing and abiding rule of conduct. If it was right to act in a certain way yesterday, this is not to say it will be right to think and act in the same way to-day—it *may* be so, perhaps it is generally so, but it is certainly not

necessarily so. It were, indeed, easy to assure ourselves of principles in the abstract. By the very nature of our being we cannot help thinking virtue praiseworthy and vice detestable. Consistency and uprightness naturally claim our admiration, while evil is instinctively felt to be a blot and a blemish on the face of nature. The mind is constituted so. But the trouble begins when rules and principles come to be applied to the necessities of the particular case in question—Am I right in holding *this particular belief*, in doing *that particular act*? Yet it is just in this application that the task of the judgment consists. And this is a task beset with a two-fold danger. We run the risk either of bringing principles down to the level of present thoughts and actions, or of so raising these in conformity with some ideal type, that they become, if not actually quixotic, at any rate strained, pedantic and *bizarre*.

But again the question recurs—What is there to save us from making errors in judgment?—what shall safely pilot us past the shoals which threaten life's voyage? There is only one answer. If a man do not find deliverance in the exercise of his own faculties, the admonitions of his own heart, he will find it nowhere else; and if these be at fault, then experience alone can be his teacher. For there is no way by which a man may shirk the responsibilities of private judgment, and at the same time enjoy the blessings of a true, and not a fictitious, peace of mind.

In saying this we are not unmindful of the wholesome influence of good counsel, nor do we undervalue the vitalizing effect of the sacred ideals of religion—(what, indeed, were man, if heaven refused to hear!) But if advice is accepted and acted upon, if doctrine

be put in practice, there must have been *appropriation*. It is an axiom in religion that no external truth is really possessed or known ; a great gift is offered in the Gospel ; but, as with any proffered gift, it must be accepted and made one's own if it is to be of any use. A fire-escape is no good if one neglect to use it.

"What thou of God and of thyself dost know,  
So know that none can force thee to forego ;  
For eh ! his knowledge is a worthless art  
Which, forming of himself no vital part,  
The foremost man he meets with readier skill  
In sleight of words, can rob him of at will."

VII.—CERTITUDE AND ILLUSION—EVIDENCE AND GROUNDS OF BELIEF.

To pursue the inquiry now in a somewhat different direction, let us ask—On what rests our certitude with regard to the familiar objects of the world around us ? On the testimony of the senses—is the ready reply ; these being the means whereby cosmic forces come into communication with our consciousness ; of this we are quite positive, and we appeal to ocular demonstration as a kind of proof which cannot be gainsaid—seeing is believing. It is usual to hear people say of some alleged wonder : "If I had *only seen it myself*, I should believe it"; and again, "One cannot disbelieve the evidence of one's own senses." And yet cases do occur in which we must own to being fooled by our senses ;—put a piece of stick in a tumbler of water, and it looks bent or broken, although we know it is not so. All tricks of conjuring and legerdemain are in point,\* and although we still say the sun *rises* and *sets*, most edu-

\* "There is a story—we cannot get it at first hand, and we give it only as possibly true—that on one occasion when an Indian juggler was called on to perform before a large party the well-known feat with a boy and a basket, an English officer came up when the performance had begun

cated persons probably feel this to be an inaccuracy. In some matters of perception, then, we give credence to the testimony of an authority other than that faculty whose very business it is to inform us on these matters. The man who thinks he sees a ghost, and calling on his friend for corroboration is met with a look of blank astonishment, is easily induced to consider this a fancy, and not a fact. We naturally appeal from our own private judgment to the opinion of others, and the more inclined are we so to do, the more occasion there is for perplexity and doubt. Still, this is a habit which is not altogether deserving of praise. It is often largely due to a weakness, a laziness of the mind ; and he who plucks up courage to *walk through* the apparition may be presumed to obtain a better proof of the fictitious nature of that which mocked his sense than if he relies alone on the testimony of another. But in either case the judgment is satisfied, and this is the main point at issue.

But what, it may be asked again, do we really mean when it is affirmed that our senses inform us correctly or the reverse ? And does not this imply some objective criterion or standard which is to be taken as a measure of correctness for the perception of the individual ? Where one among a number of persons sees or hears something which nobody else sees or hears, it is reasonable instead of joining the group of spectators climbed into a tree near at hand, and watched what occurred. The juggler took the boy under the basket ; thus far the officer and the audience saw alike. Then the sound of chopping was heard, and from under the basket the juggler threw out objects which the spectators recognised with growing horror and agitation as the severed limbs of the child. The officer, on the other hand, perceived these objects to be the segments of a large pumpkin, and saw nothing dreadful in the proceeding. Then the juggler collected the pieces, took them back into the basket, and let the child run out. The audience cried aloud with relief and astonishment ; the officer saw nothing odd in the fact that the child still possessed the legs and arms of which no one had attempted to deprive him."—*Journal S. P. R.*, July, 1889, p. 187.

able to conclude that the individual in question is labouring under a delusion, and that, whatever may have been the cause of the sense-*communique*, it is certainly devoid of objective reality. An hallucination, or illusion of sense, is either the sign of ill-health or it is a sporadic phenomenon which, it may be contended, forms the exception to the rule, and in neither case, therefore, does such a failure or freak of function touch the general question of the exercise of a sound judgment. Seeing that our sensations (it may be urged) do generally give us correct indications of the things around us (for they exist for no other purpose than this), those rare occasions when they make a mistake may be passed over with the general remark that there is nothing infallible on earth. But the aims of honest inquiry are not served by shelving awkward or refractory instances ; and, from our point of view, at any rate, it would seem worth while carefully to note the mental attitude of the individual thus supposed to be tricked by a delusion of sense. If, after listening to the representations of his friends, such a person is at length persuaded that what met his view was nothing more than an empty appearance, lacking the objective reality which it seemed to suggest—if this conviction be established in his mind, it can be so no otherwise than by an act of judgment on his part. That is to say, a man, under these circumstances, elects to trust the cumulative evidence of the senses of a number of persons (or, as in the previous case, the testimony of the senses of one other) rather than the testimony of his own. But this is only another way of stating the truth that everything which merits the name of assurance or belief must pass through the portal of the individual judgment. For men of mature faculty

and of sound mind there can, indeed, be no other ground of belief than this. To give a more extended authority to a criterion of an external character—that a man should assent to the conclusions of others which he does not believe in his own heart—were to surrender to the tyranny of numbers, were the repudiation, the very annihilation, of that which is properly understood by the term *judgment*. Moreover, if we are to think what other people think, what guarantee have we that others are thinking rightly, unless, indeed, we are guided in our selection of “others” by some reasons of our own; but this again is private judgment.

Again, that the central faculties of the mind do thus take precedence of the outworks of sense is seen not only in the facts just alluded to—which show that the testimony of the latter may be discredited—but it is seen also in the persistency of those errors of judgment which occur in mental alienation, and are known as the *idées fixes* of the insane; as, for instance, where a person is possessed with the idea that people are plotting against him when it is not true. Now, an unfounded belief like this is not subject to correction like the errors of sense.

To draw conclusions on the authority of others is more customary, however, in matters of inference than with regard to objects of immediate perception. Important as a correct observation of facts may be, their interpretation, or the inference to be drawn from them, is no less so. The truth of this is illustrated in the procedure of our courts of law, where a number of witnesses attest to matters of fact, while the judge, when instructing the jury, or in summing up, manages so to represent the matter that the right relations shall appear and the proper inferences be drawn.

And since no one's opportunities are sufficient for the accumulation of data for matters upon which he is, nevertheless, bound to form an opinion, the exercise of the judgment consists, in large measure, in selecting those authorities by whom we choose to be guided.\*

Still, the very act of appropriating the thoughts of others or another implies, as before said, the exercise of volition or choice on the part of him who thus appropriates. And although, it is true, this may in the generality of cases cost people but little effort (and if so, the worth of the view adopted will be correspondingly slight) sometimes it is far otherwise. We know, for instance, as may be gathered from the accounts of Anglicans who have turned converts to Rome, that this *auto-da-fé* by which the principle of private judgment is renounced may be attended by the most severe and protracted mental struggle. Be the effort little or great, however, the fact still remains that the normal standard of what is considered correct in any particular case resides nowhere else than in the particular mind so exercised. So that, as far as the responsibility attaching to a standard of right or wrong is concerned, we

\* Little as we should relish the imputation of championing what we conceive to be so enervating a system as Romanism, common fairness inclines us to point out that when Protestants charge Catholics that their system is "something settled by someone else and *imposed upon* the believer," they forget that this is a character attaching to many other things—to any and every form of government, for instance; so also the whole order of nature is thus settled and imposed upon us without any deference to private opinion. Catholicism is decried by its opponents, again, as something which is administered or dispensed—like medicines; something taken on trust, as we take medicine on the authority of our medical man. But here, it may be remarked, some exercise of choice is still left us: if we must swallow physic, we may, at any rate, choose our physician: and as to matters of faith they are equally taken on trust; i.e., they are equally insusceptible of exact or personal demonstration—whether we put a mediator between ourselves and the Supreme Object or no.

may say that no man can in reality think for another, any more than one man can breathe or his heart beat for his fellow.

And should it be contended that the drift of these remarks is subversive of all truth of an objective character ; if this seem to place *divine* truth, for instance, at the mercy of every breath of human fickleness and caprice—as Tertullian expressed it, *Nisi homini Deus placuerit Deus non erit*—it should be borne in mind that truth always bears the most intimate relation to the conceiving mind, and that without this organic union it could have no vitalizing influence at all. What better proof of the truth of the Gospel-message can there be than its felt adaptation to the needs and necessities of the soul ; and why do many men of inestimable character harbour an aversion to the truths of Christian evidence, if it be not for those miserable travesties of biblical criticism which represent the Creator as less just and less moral than the ideal rule of right which is implanted in His creatures ?

And, once more, since each individual differs from every other (and necessarily so, by reason of his very *individualization*) ;—since, moreover, it is beyond the range of human capacity to exhaust the grounds of knowledge in any subject whatever, it stands to reason that opinions must differ, and it is abundantly clear that such is the case. Recall, for instance, the memorable controversy between Kingsley and Newman, which resulted in the publication of the famous *Apologia* : here were two men eminent for godliness, purity of heart, and every Christian virtue—and who shall say which of the two was the better or the more conscientious—yet what a painful difference of opinion in matters of the highest moment. But stay—was it a

matter of the highest moment? "In essentials unity," said the great Augustine. If, then, such violent disagreement, we may pause to ask—Was the matter in dispute really of *vital* importance, or was it not rather the inevitable difference of view which divides the Protestant from the Catholic? Such disputation may, at any rate, enforce the value of distinguishing the statement *It is* from the declaration *I think*, where this means, "It is my opinion, I do not say it is a fact; others may think differently, and I may be wrong; but still I hold this opinion"—thus allowing for the latitude of individual variation. As Augustine again says, "In non-essentials liberty."

But while affirming that the final test of certitude can reside nowhere else than in the individual faculty with which every sane and healthy human being is endowed, this is not to forget that man is an associated, and not a solitary, being. Life is so fashioned that it were impossible for a man to shut himself up in his own subjectiveness without doing despite to his sense of moral obligation. No one lives for himself,—what we do and think influences and reacts upon our fellow. Indeed, the most important part of what is for each individual his "external world" consists of nothing else than the feelings, thoughts, expressions, and doings of his fellow-men. Even in religion, the "innermost region of the spirit of man," this sympathy for his fellow, this leaning to his kind, is manifest. As soon as someone is convinced of religious truth, does he not evince a lively desire that others should be brought to a knowledge of the same? And what just man could bear the idea of "being saved" if others, perhaps dear relatives, are to perish in torments? So ingrained is this social instinct, so hallowed are our affections one for another, that God

is called "our Father," and we "His children," and we are expressly told that it is in vain to expect His favour so long as we are at enmity with our brother.

VIII.—VARIOUS KINDS OF TRUTH—HEAD-KNOWLEDGE AND HEART-INSTINCTS.

As soon as we approach the subject of grounds of belief (or the reasons why we should act and think in a particular way), it is, however, of the first importance that we should distinguish between different kinds of truth. It is indeed obvious that truths of the intellect are very different from truths which touch the heart or satisfy the conscience. While *these* are instinctive, internal, and come, so to speak, "without observation," truths of the other kind may be described as external, as imperatively demanding a conscious effort of mental application before they are learnt, and oftentimes to be had only by dint of much labour and *conning*. Facts of personal experience, sensations of our bodily frame, convictions of the heart and conscience, do not rest upon any external proof—they carry their own verification with them. No one wants a proof that the sun shines; that a slip of the tongue is often a very unfortunate thing, or an act of kindness always a very agreeable thing. Matters such as these we call self-evident; they are matters of fact which wait upon no external demonstration. It is not only that they contain their proof within themselves, but that they are insusceptible of any other kind of proof. For if a man do not *feel* a thing to be admissible or inadmissible, right or wrong, in good or in bad taste, no one can prove it to him;

arguments may influence the head, but they do not touch the heart.

Far otherwise is it with that other class of truths, those, namely, which we take on testimony : such as the records of history, the reports of learning and scholarship, the "tradition of the elders," and, indeed, all those matters in which we are obliged to trust to the asseverations of other persons, who therefore become our authority on the subjects in question.

And if the inferior nature of this kind of knowledge be pointed out, as depending on hearsay and to be had only at second-hand—if it seems a poor thing to believe just because one is *told*—it needs but to recall the fact that the range of individual capacity is far too limited to furnish that fund of ideas with which every well-informed man is bound to provide himself, and that if there is to be anything worthy the name of philosophy and science, anything beyond the empiricism of the individual, this must be vastly augmented by the multiplied experience of our fellow-men.

But let it be clearly understood that truths of this character are the business of the intellect or understanding. To give an illustration:—it is the requirements of the intellect that must be satisfied in divers matters pertaining to religious doctrine. It is written, Blessed are they which believe but have not seen ; but the persons referred to must have either heard or read—*i.e.*, they must have sufficient *grounds* for belief before they can be assured that such-and-such assertions are worthy of credence. As, indeed, another scripture says, How shall they believe unless they hear ? In matters of evidence—in all matters, that is to say, where truth is accepted on the testimony of others—it would be to do violence to the just demands of the

intellect were men to believe without knowing the reason why.

The phenomena of science, the axioms or necessary truths of mathematics (or the laws of quantity and number) which govern these, and the formal truths of logic, which, as *ars artium*, is, in its turn, the final referee in every kind of intellectual work—all satisfy the understanding while they leave the heart unmoved. And, indeed, it would be absurd to confound laws, scientific and logical, with, say, the truths of external form and beauty on the one hand, or with truths of moral consciousness (or "divine" truth) on the other. Truths of the first class are seen by the eye of the intellectual vision; truths of the second kind appeal to the æsthetic sense of taste, whilst moral or spiritual truth is discerned by the eye of conscience.

And if now we observe the way in which one kind of truth may co-exist with the absence or negation of another kind, we shall gain an idea of the difference involved, and see the propriety of using the terms *internal* and *external* in the present connexion. Where, for example, some moral lesson is conveyed through the representations of dramatic art we have the case of an internal reality, which may deeply stir the feelings, conjoined with an outward guise of fiction and pretence. The truths of the syllogism present, again, exactly the reverse character, for they are outward and formal, and may co-exist with an internal fiction. And, once more, it is conceivable that outward behaviour shall be faultless, and perfectly satisfy the canons of good taste, while moral degeneracy and baseness of heart may, all the time, be reigning within.

From the foregoing considerations we see that very different notions may be signified by the word *truth*.

Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that the lax use of this term has oftentimes enabled men to "conjure with a name." Where, for example, truth has been taken as synonymous with *fact*, we may note the tendency to promote the dicta and formularies of science to a place of authority in the moral sphere for which they have no warrant whatever.\* We sometimes hear of the "treachery of facts": it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of the "treachery" of truth; but there is no nonsense in making this imputation with regard to facts. The significance of phenomena being rigorously conditioned by the laws of thought, the so-called "facts" of science are necessarily susceptible to change as knowledge increases.

And then, again, does not the word *truth* always seem to carry with it the idea of something sacred? That which operates in a boy's breast when he feels he *dare not tell a lie* is surely something sacred and worthy of all reverence. It were well, therefore, to observe a more restricted use of the word *truth*,—that it should not by loose thinking stray outside its own path of high moral endeavour. Moreover, truth should always be understood in the closest relation to practice—in conjunction with that kind of living and doing which concerns man's best and highest interests, and not merely his interests as an animal. What we call the "discovery of truth" is something which seems to concern mankind alone of all created beings. The

\* Consider the misleading character of such a statement as the following one from Professor Bain:—"Scientific training results in a devotion to truth"; substitute the word "artistic" for "scientific" and the fallacy becomes still plainer, since the circumstances of an artist's life are notoriously lacking in a regard to moral and religious truth. It is true, the exact sciences were taught at Athens in Plato's time in order to give the mind a hold on *principle* as distinct from *opinion*, and no doubt this contributed to the steadyng of the intellect, but hardly to a steadyng of the *passions*.

mind of man has many functions, but this may be called, in an especial manner, its own peculiar task. Everything that has life spends that life in achievement and labour ; organization and machinery exist that acts and functions shall take place. So, too, with the human mind and the pursuit of truth ; the one may be said to exist for the other, for it is only through the working of the mind that truth can be brought to light, can be possessed and known, and acknowledged as the rule of life.

But not only is it the devotees of a hollow philosophy who would pose in the sacred habiliments of truth ; this high name may be no less abused as the catchword of party and priesthood. Hence it is necessary to be on our guard, lest we come to regard truth as something mystic and magical—something which may be stowed away in the inaccessible tabernacula of doctrine. Much rather is it of the very essence of truth to participate, and participate freely, in all the warmth and friction of this instant and most present life of ours ;—even as He who was the personification of truth mingled freely as a man amongst his fellows.

And, once more to make allusion to religious belief, we may observe that it is not uncommon in religious circles to hear a remark like the following : “ Will such a one cling to his moral convictions and hold in abeyance his intellectual difficulties ? ” But, as we have already incidentally observed, an intellectual want has to be met also in matters of faith, and many a one who has held aloof from the verities of religion would have been only too glad to give up his “ intellectual difficulties,” and indulge a yearning for security and peace (and perhaps also the wishes of his best friends) if his conscience had let him. If, on the other hand, a man

sees that a cordial acceptance of Christian faith would help as nothing else will in the battle with sin and temptation—if he sees that this would make him strong, happy and useful, instead of being weak, dubious and miserable, he has, to be sure, a very good reason for regarding those doubts which assault his belief as something to be withheld and not entertained.

And, to speak more generally, how difficult it is before the event to know which way lies the path of wisdom. Is it wise to take up this book of “doubtful” tendency, to listen to that preacher of “advanced” views—for it may be said his faith is but a poor weakling than can stand no criticism? Is it wise to go abroad and run the risk of imperilling principles of early training by the insidious example of a looser morality? Is it wise to cultivate the acquaintance of this man of shallow intellect, but burning with misplaced zeal, or of that other to whom all things and all men, good, bad, and indifferent, seem to be equally welcome? Is it wise to indulge this natural propensity, that particular taste?

Such are the kind of questions which present themselves to the judgment of opening manhood; and obviously—(valuable as the advice of sympathizing friends may be)—a man is, after all, thrown upon the resources of his own tact and discretion, and the inward disposition to virtue which he may possess.

These last words lead us further to remark how inseparably bound up together are these three things—character, creed, conduct; even as that other trio,—feeling, thought, and action. And as the first of these—character—is a variable combination or integration of a man’s native endowment with the influence of his surroundings—of the full significance of which he is, of

course, the sole judge—how impossible it is for any second person to gauge with precision the merit which really attaches to personal acts and beliefs ; how inevitable also, regret it as we may, the differences of opinion which sever man from man. Iron is always the same, but it may enter into many different combinations,—sulphates, carbonates, and so forth ; in like manner truth may be one and the same, “but the *Smithate* of truth must always differ from the *Brownate* of truth.”

#### IX.—CONSCIENCE THE “SUPREMA LEX.”

AN allusion to the story of Eugene Aram formed the introduction to the present inquiry, and this citation of a “case of conscience” really strikes the keynote of the whole theme. It is true, a man will occasionally find himself in some situation of emergency and peril which taxes all his wits, and which seems to have nothing whatever to do with the deeper motives of conscience ; moreover, we have taken occasion to urge the propriety of, as far as that may be possible, liberating the exercise of the judgment from a too heavy burden of moral responsibility,—still it is impossible to disavow the universal reign of conscience ; the jurisdiction of that privy council in which the individual himself is at once judge, witness, and sole spectator. If to feeling we have ascribed the initiation of movement in thought and action, conscience by its internal law of merit is the chief guide—if feeling drives the machinery of thought, it is conscience which drives that machinery *aright* : and this is the gist of the whole matter. For to what purpose the straining sail and stroke of screw-propeller,

to what purpose all this display of power, if the ship do not answer to her helm?

And if we are careful to confine the inquiry to the interests, not of mankind in general, but of each individual man—and this has been our aim—we may observe that the concerns of the understanding fall far short of the concerns of conscience, the interests of the heart. Thus, while we expect that all alike, young and old, poor and rich, ignorant and learned, shall do their duty and follow their light as far as in them lies, we do not recognise the same claim binding upon all as regards those matters of information which vary according to people's pursuits and position in life. And although, it is obvious, action must be suited to circumstances—that there should be a different code of rules for the counting-house, the council-chamber, or the domestic circle—still if one thinks of the large proportion of human conduct which owes allegiance to the moral sense, it seems questionable whether, distinct as the business of the intellect seems to lie from that of conscience, these faculties can really be supposed to pursue their respective ways without affecting each other, like parallel lines which never meet. Rather may it be affirmed that all judgments, all actions, however remote they may seem from conscience, do nevertheless, in the long run, bear a moral significance. Wherever a man may be, whatever he may be doing, be it in the workshop or the study, be it in the adventure of voyage or travel, or be it in the excitement of the chase, or, again, in the rapt attention of the theatre or lecture-hall—the question always recurs : Am I right in being here, am I right in doing this or that, in engaging in this or that course of action?

Conscience is always with us, or, at least, seems to

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have a closer connection with the tactics of life than any other guide to action. Logic is not wanted in the studio, and aesthetics would be out of place in courts of law : the judgment competent to plan a campaign, or to weather a vessel through the storm, or the physical courage required to lead a charge in battle, would be uncalled for in scenes remote from these ; but conscience is a companion which never leaves us ; it lies down with us, it goes in and out with us, it is equally present in the busy throng as in the solitary watches of the night.

We have pointed out elsewhere the pre-eminence of the moral and spiritual law in man, and the precedence which this takes of laws psychical and physical. Here we are concerned in tracing, from a practical point of view, the *regulative* function which the law of man's spiritual hygiene exercises over the psychical law of his mental fabric. Logic has been called the *police of the sciences* because it is a law-giver to whose authority all branches of learning and philosophy must bow. If this is so, if logic supplies rules for the right conduct of the understanding, and if it be also true that the affairs of the intellect are subordinate to the affairs of conscience in the sense that the latter are conterminous with the entire range of life, we might call conscience the police for the conduct of life as a whole—man's guide and guardian in all his beliefs and ways and doings, from the first dawning of his faculties till the time when these are closed in sickness or in death.

But, not to rest satisfied with high-sounding phrases, let us illustrate further what is meant when it is said that conscience is a rule to be applied to the whole range of life by observing that there are certain sciences which we call *pure* or *abstract*, and others again which are called *applied* or *practical*. Mathematics is an instance

of the first ; so is metaphysics. Now a man may devote himself to the study of mathematics and yet remain a very useless member of society ; indeed a high position in the tripos has often been gained at the expense of a capacity for active usefulness. The metaphysician, again, is considered almost identical with the visionary and dreamer. Let these sciences be *applied*, however, and all this is changed. Instead of knowledge inert and useless (except as the ornament of an elegant life, or a pretext for killing time), we have the animation of useful industries and arts : ships are constructed and are guided by quadrant and compass, railroads are projected, and commerce owns its indebtedness to science, and practice to theory. So also with metaphysics—let it only be *applied* and we recognise its value in certain practical concerns connected with the growth of the mind, the education of the young, the investigation of aboriginal races, and the like.

But this is only to reiterate the well-known truth that the value of a rule or guide to action *lies in its application*. Logic would have no *raison d'être*, its occupation would be gone, if it were not applied to the necessities of the human understanding. The same may be said of conscience with regard to the dynamics of life as a whole.

And to come back to *motives*, with which we began ; we may remark it is the spirit in which a thing is done, and not so much the thing itself, which touches the individual most closely,—as in the Pauline injunction, “ Whatever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the Lord.” And how true it is that the way of putting things, the way of looking at things, sometimes makes all the difference. The influence that events have upon us, their moral significance for us, is so largely contingent

on disposition or temper of mind. Individual happiness greatly depends on the art of *taking kindly* to things. It is a matter of no small consequence to know whether, in any particular instance, it is well to ignore or to recognize a fact—to turn your back upon it, or to give it your countenance and consideration. If trials are taken in a certain way they may nourish and sustain and become the very aliment of the spirit of man—taken in another way they act like poison, and goad to madness and deeds of despair.

Such are some of the fruits of the application of the rule of conscience, and such the difference between the actual contents of knowledge—the hard facts of experience—and that gentle guide which is always at hand as interpreter. And however firm and solid these facts of our earthly existence may appear, do we not feel that *they* are the passing shadows, and that it is that invisible rule of right which is, after all, the most important, the most real, the most permanent and true?

“ Communion sweet, communion large and high,  
Our Reason, guardian angel, and our God,  
Then nearest these, when others most remote,  
And all ere long shall be remote but these.”

IV.

*CONCERNING THE GENESIS  
OF MAN.*

*Honour each thing for what it once may be,  
In bud the rose, in egg the eagle see ;  
Bright butterfly behold in ugly worm,  
And trust that man enfolds an angel form.*

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.

## IV.

# Concerning the Genesis of Man.

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### I.—THE HUMAN GERM.

"WHEN fairly pursued science makes absurd drafts upon our powers of comprehension and belief. It does nothing to reduce the number of strange things we may believe."

These words might form a fitting preface to the following remarks on the genesis or first beginnings of man; for it does seem incredible that a tiny atom of matter—the human germ-cell—should contain within it the power of reproducing not only the form and feature of departed ancestors, but their very idiosyncrasies and tricks. Nor is it possible to fix our thoughts on this earliest sign—it is at first but a microscopic point—of that which is in time destined to become a human being, to picture to ourselves its real significance, without a powerful stretch of the imagination.

The like may be said, indeed, of many a natural phenomenon in the world around us, the real significance of which, far from being apparent on the face of it, discovers itself rather to the scientific use of the imagination. On this wise we interpret some of the simplest

and commonest experiences of life: we have come to understand, for instance, that it is the sun and not the earth which performs a diurnal revolution in the twenty-four hours; our senses tell us just the contrary, but they are corrected and overruled by what might be called *fancy founded on fact*. So again, it is imagination and not sense which pictures the comet, apparently so stationary, as flying through space at the rate of so many millions of miles per minute; or the young sapling, which seems equally motionless, as performing in reality a movement of growth in every moment of time. And so—to return to that minute speck of protoplasm which marks the starting-point of man's earthly career—we believe this represents an epitome, so to speak, of the adult organism from which it comes;—this seems incredible, it passes our comprehension, but that it is true the laws of heredity indisputably prove.

A child is sometimes said to be the very image of its father, and that too, not only in outward form and feature, but in certain ways which seem most emphatically to belong to the man himself. It is true, tricks are catching, and young people are adepts at imitation, but the traits of character now referred to are sometimes manifested in the earliest infancy; they are evidently congenital and not acquired; they can have come no otherwise, therefore, than through the elements of reproduction.

Nor is that all. The wonderful endowment of this minute germ-cell does not stop at the curiously faithful resuscitation of parental lineaments, for it is well known that characters may appear in a grandchild which have been entirely absent in the parent. "Look at the little French girl shrugging her shoulders," exclaimed the mother of a child of eighteen months, whose sole *rapport*

with foreigners and their ways lay in the fact that her grandfather had been a Frenchman. Now if this observation was true (and we have Darwin's authority for it) there can be no doubt that this " shrug of the shoulders," while skipping one generation, had been *passed on* to the second by means of that minute particle of protoplasm which forms the only bridge of communication between one generation and another.

It is sometimes remarked in a tone of surprise that in spite of the millions of people in the world there are no two persons alike. If, however, we consider the beginnings of man, we may observe there is provision made for an almost infinite chance of variation.

We have referred to the human ovum or germ-cell as representing the parent in miniature ; but it would be incorrect to say this miniature is destined (circumstances favouring) to grow and develop as a photograph, under the influence of light, grows more and more like the object of which it is the copy ; nature never meant us to be exact copies one of another, and she has taken care that children should not be a mere memento or *souvenir* of those who beget them. Long before the influences of an external environment have begun to act, already in fecundation, in fact, has the foundation been laid for the genesis of an entirely new creature. For the blending together of two individuals of different sex (not to mention the multiple influences of the ancestral lines on either side) allows for diversity in form and character which differentiates the offspring from the parent-stock in a way which would not be the case if, for instance, father begat son and the mother the daughter without an integration of the sexes.

Division of labour has been found the best way of ensuring the excellence of that which is produced :

marriage, or the mating of the sexes, is an example of it. For the offspring of those organisms in which a couple of individuals combine for this object are more vigorous than those which are descended from a single individual—a truth which is best illustrated in the case of plants (see p. 46). The curious contrivances resorted to by nature to bring about the cross-fertilization of plants—a result compassed by means of insects, birds, or winds, in a word by things of motion, since plants cannot of themselves come together—is a proof of the value of the principle involved.

Now since man is a unisexual being the embryo which issues from this conjunction of the sexes must be unisexual also; the sex of the new individual being determined by the inclination one way or the other due to the preponderance of the one sex over the other in the particular parentage in question, and at the precise moment of conception. More than this one cannot say. The almost infinite range of parental and ancestral influences at work generally insures that the balance shall be fairly struck one way or the other. Still singular cases do occur, though very rarely, in which the offspring partakes of the character of both parents. This gives rise to the phenomenon known as *hermaphroditism*; in which case one is forced to the conclusion that the struggle of sexual influences has, at the moment when the fertilization of the ovum is taking place, resulted in a drawn battle.

The question of sex is, however, only part of the larger question of heredity—or that reversal, ancestral mould or constitution with which the new-born being makes its entry into the external world: and to this inquiry—the consideration namely of those rudiments of our future self which were (without the least know-

ledge or choice on our part) fashioned and shaped by the inscrutable finger of nature—we shall turn in the next chapter.

#### II.—THE WORK OF THE EMBRYO—HEREDITY AND ATAVISM.

THE few months of preparation before the domicile of the future “ego” is ready to appear in the visible world marks the task of the human embryo. But the derived powers with which the embryo sets to work are of the lowliest description;—they are, i.e., those simplest and most elementary functions of animal and vegetable life which proceed with the blind impulse, the machine-like regularity of natural law. A seed dropped into the ground begins to germinate, and will grow into the form and stature of the tree from which it fell; it is its nature so to do. And in like manner, (subject to certain considerations already pointed out) it is the nature of the embryo to grow and develop into the likeness of the individuals from whom it comes. But if this be so, if the business of the embryo consists simply and solely in growing into a diminutive human being, a rudimentary *homunculus*, which, by-and-by, taking figure and shape in conformity with a certain ancestral type appears at last as the new-born babe—if this be all, what part or lot has the character of the parent in this very primitive piece of business? The new-born infant is immaturity and poverty itself as compared with the full-blown powers of adult life, yet the infant is a prodigious advance upon the humble seed or germ from which it is sprung. What kind of relationship or *rapport* can there possibly be between that lowly form of organic matter which we call the

germ-cell, and the capacities of the adult organism, the manifestations of the adult mind? Yet the link of heredity, if laid down at all, must be laid down at this initial stage of existence; and that there does exist a faculty of transmission through that slender bridge which spans the gulf between the individualities of the parent and his child—even touching the tones of his voice or the style of his handwriting—is abundantly proved by the facts of heredity and atavism. The whole question of congenital disease is based upon this truth.

Minute as are the elements of reproduction and humble as is their quality in the scale of life, it is incontestable that they form a channel of communication by means of which events that have taken place in the particular lineage in question may be brought into relation with the architect of the fortunes of the new being. The embryo is instinct with the memories of the past.\*

Sometimes, under very exceptional circumstances, generally in some moment of extremity or peril, reminiscences of the past may sweep over the strands of mind in the most astonishing manner; scenes and incidents long ago supposed to be dead and forgotten may pass before the mind's eye with all the distinctness of a series of *tableaux vivants*. Now these memories have been imprinted on the organ of mind, and, provided a suitable stimulus be imparted, are ready to start again into consciousness. And if the life-history of the individual be thus mirrored in the tissues of the brain, so in like manner may the history of a particular line of forefathers be latent in the germ, (the physical basis is

\* A strange fear of drowning had pervaded Sir David Brewster's life. He always believed that he was to perish in that way, a fear which strangely enough was discovered to haunt the minds of more than one of his descendants, even when too youthful to be prepossessed by any knowledge of others having felt the same.—*The Home Life of Sir D. Brewster*, p. 137.

the same in either case), and it is doubtless this ancestral memory or record of the past which provides the type or plan upon which the embryo sets to work.

This revival of the belongings of other lives and another period must be understood, however, in a strictly potential sense. That is to say family characters *may* be, but this is not to say they *must* or *will* be reproduced ; for the influences which guide the embryo in its work of construction are obviously of a nature which baffles any attempt at exact calculation ; whether some ancestor's mental twist shall reappear in his offspring—whether it shall be made more pronounced, or straightened out, or perchance bent the other way, by the crowd of competing agencies at work, it would be vain to predict. "We should remember," says Mr. Francis Galton, in his *Record of Family Faculties*, "the insignificance of any single ancestor in a remote degree. In the fourth generation backwards there are sixteen ancestors from whom the child receives on an average an equal inheritance. In the fifth there are thirty-two. One ancestor who lived at the time of the Norman Conquest, twenty-four generations back, contributes (on the supposition of no intermarriage of kinsfolk) less than one part in 16,000,000 to the constitution of a man of the present day."

Yet it is not difficult to see the *kind* of belongings which are most likely to be transmitted. The primary object at this initial stage of existence is that a physical frame be provided befitting the requirements of a physical world ; nor would the utilitarian purposes of nature be served by taking much account at this early stage of those higher faculties which distinguish the individual in after-life. That adult characteristics of ancestors are accessible to the embryo—are, somehow or other,

inherent in the materials with which the embryo works—is attested by the facts of heredity, but since they do not form the staple of that work they are, as a rule, set aside, and not being made use of may be said to fall into decay. Hence, at birth, such qualities are conspicuous by their absence. Instead of entering the world equipped with the accumulated wealth and experience of parentage the infant's mind is a perfect blank, and all has to be learnt over again ;—as regards those things which go to make human individuality there is an absolutely fresh start.

Now it is, of course, the most important things which make the deepest impression on the memory, but things of no consequence drop quickly out of view, and are straightway forgotten ; and if, for sake of elucidation, we apply the term *memory* to the unreflecting operations of natural law, if we apply it, namely, to the work of formation which is going on during the period of pre-natal existence, we may conjecture that those higher psychical attributes of parental and ancestral personality latent in the germ-cell on its detachment from the parent frame, being of no use to the embryo in its work of construction, are speedily forgotten, tend to sink into oblivion and to become extinct ;—or if they do happen to survive, it will be but as the faintest reminiscence—as atavism, in short.

To establish the coherence of these remarks it is however necessary to make another assumption ; it is necessary—perhaps we ought also to say—to give to our scientific imagination an additional stretch. For when it is said the embryo is in possession of certain *memories*, we are assuming a point of view which regards humanity as an organism in itself—we are thinking of the continuity of the life of the human race as a whole.

Memory implies a past ; where there is no past there is, of course, nothing to remember : and so when we speak of the *memories* of the embryo we are referring to this rudimentary state of existence as an episode in the long life-history of the human race—an episode which has occurred times without number in the past, and will go on repeating itself to the end. It seems reasonable to regard the matter in this enlarged sense, for the work of the embryo is purely the concern of natural law. The earthly structure which is, in process of time, to be identified with the personality of an adult human being, belongs in the beginning strictly and solely to the sphere of those blind, unconscious, cosmic forces which will continue in operation as long as the world endures.

As a matter of fact, then, the personality of ancestry is almost obliterated in the tomb of intra-uterine life, or if it do survive rises therefrom as the mere ghost or shadow of its former self. Hence this curious border land, or *regnum protisticum*, between parent and offspring is not only a link or nexus, it is also a break or hiatus, in the chain of created beings ; it is a provision whereby the continuity of the race is secured, while at the same time *new* individuals shall come into existence.

The parental force which animates the germ may be represented as just sufficing to conduct the new being to the threshold of its proper sphere of independent life. The relic of the parent is the germ of the offspring ; the germ is, it is true, a fragment of the past—the lineal descendant of a former state of things—but it is the new environment which makes another and a new creature out of it. And once in this, its proper element, the new being is dominated, not by the fading impressions of the past, but by the contemporary concerns of the present world. The interest attaching to the machine-

like precision of the automaton-builder of the beginnings of life is now exchanged for that which attaches to the laborious, painstaking methods of intelligence and reason. Well may we contrast this dwelling-place of the future "ego," fixed by kith and kin—this patrimony inherited by us like our name, without choice or will on our part—well may we contrast this with the influences which are awaiting the young novitiate in the school of experience. If our debit may be said to reside in the past, our credit assuredly lies in the present and waits upon the future.

But no sooner is the human organism fairly established in harmony with its new bearings—no sooner is it launched upon the ocean of conscious life—than the part which heredity plays is relegated to a subordinate sphere. The original artist, so skilful in hitting off family traits at the beginning, continues still at work, is working indeed all through life; the selfsame initial force which conditions the advance from embryo to infant presides also over the eventualities which befall in the course of physical life—it regulates dentition and adolescence, and leads the infant up to man—but, as time goes on, the work, at first so strongly marked, becomes at last but faintly tinged with the memorials of a bygone age; considerations of *some* particular ancestral line shift now into the background—ancestry, so valuable at first, loses its hold upon the budding energies of the new life—laws of lineage and pedigree are henceforward swallowed up in the wider consideration of general laws which bear the same significance for all individuals alike.

We have observed that special traits descend from sire to son, but we have not omitted to point out that this is not by any means to be taken as the leading indi-

cation of nature's plan. The intention of nature seems, on the contrary, to be displayed in an arrangement which is calculated to produce special *differences* while preserving the general type. Were it not for this, children would take after their parents far more than they do. The cropping up of family peculiarities is the necessary consequence of one organism deriving from another ; but, interesting as are such *scraps from the family record*, the object aimed at in this early stage of pre-natal existence is presumably not so much a specimen of the family as a specimen of the race ; it is, after all, not so much the special and individual, as the general type which the embryo is concerned in producing. Indeed, it is by very reason of the fading away of the special personality of the parent-stock that a reversion to primordial types, and a development progressing on more general lines, is rendered possible.

For what is the embryo dreaming of in that long, deep sleep of the womb, what visions are those which pass before its dreaming sight, what story is it that nature whispers in its dreaming ear—a story which the dreamer straightway puts into execution and shapes itself accordingly, with the selfless, soulless, automatic mimicry of a mesmeric trance ? Is it a vision of ancestral halls ; is it the "tales of a grandfather" ? No ; at least not at first. Memory has travelled back beyond the limits of the proudest pedigree, far, far back beyond the beginnings of the human race, back in the æons of the past, till it rests upon a time when vertebrate animals first made their appearance on the face of the earth. Not without reason do we account the backbone so highly, for it is the beginning of man's physical frame. Nature first lays down the keel, and, step by step, is the bark of life built and compacted, but not

assuming all at once the fashion of the coming man. First of all, the several intermediate stages of vertebrate life are run through—fish, reptile, bird, beast, and only lastly—man. And as each advance is made, as each milestone in creation's path is repeated and passed, do the memories of the embryo-builder converge upon that which is, properly speaking, its own ancestral line.

From the foregoing it will be gathered that the reminiscences of the embryo are mainly reminiscences of animal existence. It is evident, therefore, that where family traits are preserved the bodily features of the animal organism will have the priority over those mental characteristics which in each individual are so largely the result of his own experiences in life. Short-sightedness, colour-blindness, left-handedness, gait, gesture, voice, are all matters pertaining to the bodily frame, and, are therefore frequently transmitted; and if insanity and consumption run in families, it is because they are essentially connected with a depraved habit of the system.

Such considerations also go to show that man's bodily frame is not only the remnant, the *réchauffé*, of a particular past, it is also a part of universal nature; and it is this character—as something belonging not so much to the family as to the race, by implication therefore something most emphatically *not-ourselves*, but rather an instrument provided by nature for our use—it is this character which properly attaches to the animal frame of man.

We have spoken of the embryo, figuratively, as working in a dream; for what is a dream but the reminiscence of a former experience at a time when the sleeper's normal power of will is in abeyance, and his perceptions of the external world abolished? And such is, in truth,

the condition of the embryo-builder ; it has no power of origination in itself, but works according to the derived powers which are latent in the germ. This dream-like character of ancestral reversion is, moreover, curiously substantiated by the fact that some particular personal trick may be observed to be reproduced in a man's descendant *only during sleep*, and that where such vestiges do occur in early childhood they may be observed to melt away as the personality of the conscious "ego" gains ground—like stars of the morning, which gradually pale, and are finally extinguished by the full light of advancing day.

III.—THE MACHINERY OF INSTINCT—ITS INADEQUACY TO HUMAN NEEDS—AUTOMATISM A STEPPING-STONE TO HIGHER ENDS.

SINCE animality is the source and cradle of his being, man at the outset of his earthly pilgrimage scarcely merits the term *human* in anything else than the fashion of his frame ; and if to the extent of possessing a bodily make which is the earnest of a more distinguished career the human infant is more fortunate than the young of other animals, in other respects it is certainly much less well off than they are. While the new-born babe is the very picture of impotence, and if not instantly cared for would forthwith perish, the progeny of animals make their débüt into this world very comfortably provided with the experience of parentage. Nor is this surprising when we reflect what a vastly more extensive range of topics and interests has exercised the adult human brain than is the case with the adult brain of a fish, a beast or a fowl—or even of the ant (which, as Darwin says, "is one of the most

marvellous atoms of matter in the world, perhaps more so than the brain of a man")—thus leaving much less room for the continued action of that unconscious force derived from ancestry which we call *instinct*.

Consequently in animals instinct is handed down from one generation to another—not as with us, for the most part (and if we except the prosaic arts of breathing and sucking) a mere curiosity and a subject of delectation for the learned few—but an instrument ready to be turned to immediate account in the struggle of life. One result of this is that animals are the veriest slaves of habit and routine, for all this they inherit from paternity—it is their patrimony—in the same way as we inherit our bodies or our names. Improvement or progress, therefore, there is none, or nothing to speak of. The wonderful instinct of the bee is not only of a far higher grade than is ever seen in the human species, but it also remains to the end the sole guide of life. From the beginning to the end of its days there is no new departure or invention on the part of an animal, there is no *life-history* as in man—a lion born a thousand years ago differs in no material respects from the lion of to-day. Whatever may have been the state of affairs in former ages of the world, progress is now the prerogative of humanity;—in man the individual we call it education, in mankind the race, civilization. Unlike animals, man is an unfinished product of nature: *he dies learning*.

Yet is this progress towards the goal of man's true happiness and peace so slow that it is easily lost to view, and there are not wanting persons who, fixing a pessimistic eye on the inconsistencies and shortcomings which so largely fill the measure of life, bid us contemplate the happy action of instinct as something to be

regarded by man with respectful admiration, not unmixed with a humbling sense of his own inferiority and failure.

But is this just? Much as we may envy animals a machinery of life which is not subject to the ignorance and folly that make human existence so sad, we must not forget a very important consideration, and a reassuring one to those who object to views which seem like an inversion of the truth.

Machinery always impresses the mind with an exalted idea of the certainty and ease with which the object in view is secured—but machinery is nothing more than a means to an end, and to this end it ministers and is subservient. Now weighed in the balance of human criticism (and this is the only rule or standard of judgment we have to go by) there can be no doubt that the capacities and powers which we see working with this machine-like regularity are of inferior value as compared with the interests of humanity. Indeed, it is a matter of common remark that the perfection of mechanical action is mostly observable when the capacity or power is of a decidedly humble and elementary kind. The reason of this is plain. It is obviously necessary that simpler contrivances should act with precision if complicated ends are to be served thereby. In playing a musical instrument, or in reading a romance, it is necessary that elementary activities should have attained a high pitch of excellence before the proper aim of such pursuits can be fulfilled. But who pauses to consider the fingering of the keyboard when he listens to a sonata of Beethoven, who stops to marvel at the facility, the almost mechanical ease, by which some gorgeous picture of the imagination is aroused through the medium of the printed page? Elementary powers are, it is true, primary and

all important as giving the wherewithal for that which is to follow ; but it is that which comes *last* which is *best*. Marvellous as is the dexterity with which the embryo builds up, from a bit of simple protoplasm, an image of the coming man, we do not, for all that, rank Beethoven's embryo above Beethoven the musician ; we do not put the seed above the fruit and flower, the foundation above the superstructure, or at least we do not do this unless we adopt the plan of turning things upside down (as is the way of some philosophers), and then looking at them in this distorted fashion.

For the history of man is not only the history of the most intelligent of all animals, it is the history of the evolution of spirit. How much greater then, both racially and individually, is man than the lower animals ! What is the unconscious working of instinct, what the dream of animal existence—so bound up with the course of nature that every cloud which draws across the face of the sun makes a myriad forms of insect-life quake and fail and die—what is this as compared with the life of the human race ? Art and philosophy, politics and commerce, nations and empires, Babylon, Athens, Rome, London—do not the works and ways of the brute-creation sink into insignificance when we consider the achievements of man.

But here some one may make reply : True, all these things are wonderful monuments of sagacity and skill, but do not forget that a manifestation of the self-same attributes of sagacity and skill (though differing no doubt in point of degree) is observable also among other creatures. Consider a community of ants, for instance, with its “division of labour, its slaves and fighting population, its farmers and miners, its nurseries for pets and weaklings, its burial customs, its political and industrial

order," might not such a description stand equally well for a community of men? Are not the tunnels of an ant hill as admirable in their way as the streets of Paris?

Perhaps so; but we have been careful to point out that *knowledge*—(and instinct we said was knowledge carried to the highest pitch)—is not the proper insignia of man. By superiority of craft and skill man, if he do not always surpass, does generally outwit and get the better of the brute-creation; but it is not meant to say that other animals are not also artful and clever: nor can it be denied that the most marvellous exhibitions of psychic power in man may also be matched in the lower animals. If men are clairvoyant and can project their "double" to distant scenes, animals can hear sounds which are inaudible to us, they can see light which is beyond the range of our eyes, and find their way about in a manner which utterly baffles our comprehension. Yet there is that in man whereby he is different from all other denizens of earth:—it is the possession, namely, of that spiritual faculty which, while it betrays how large a negative element there is in the nature of man, accounts also for the fact that the riches and uses of the earth, though far more at his service than is the case with other animals, are nevertheless impotent to secure him true content; whereas so long as health and strength endure such things are presumably all-sufficient to make *them* happy. Bodily disease is fatal to the comfort and (if we may be allowed the expression) the *usefulness* of a dog or a cow; not necessarily so to the man or the woman "whose treasure is in heaven." \*

\* "It was my privilege," says Miss Frances Power Cobbe, "to know a woman who for more than twenty years was chained by a cruel malady to what Heine called a 'mattress grave.' Little or nothing was it possible for her to do for anyone in the way of ordinary service. Her many schemes of usefulness and beneficence were all stopped. Yet merely by

It stands to reason that in proportion as the machinery of instinct—which works in such admirable harmony with the general course of nature—is defective, by just so much will life be less in harmony with, less dependent upon, less part and parcel of, the general scheme. The link which binds man to mother-earth has been weakened, not strengthened, by the introduction of the spiritual and heavenly ore : his dream of earthly happiness is shaken ; to him earth is no more the congenial habitat it is to the wild creatures of the field and forest. “Therefore the heart looks into space to be away from earth.”

Yet once more the voice of the objector may be heard declaring that instances are not unknown which go to show that man has, after all, no monopoly of that sense of moral obligation which makes him answerable for his actions, and which is the foundation of his moral being. Be that as it may—in the absence of speech there seems some difficulty in interpreting the motives of dumb animals—but be that as it may, and without denying a capacity for self-sacrificing devotion on the part of man’s four-footed companion and friend which may well put his selfishness to shame, we seem to be hitting the mark when we say that, at all events, what is *very little in animals is very great in man*. “One swallow does not make a summer,” and nature is full of instances of functions which are rudimentary and organs which seem to be out of their proper place ; there are not a few awkward specimens of mixed type which give naturalists some trouble in labelling and docketing and referring to their right places : still, we do not class serpents with

attaining to the lofty heights of spiritual life and knowledge, that suffering woman helped and lifted up the hearts of all who came around her, and did more real good, and of the highest kind, than half the preachers and philanthropists in the land.”

quadrupeds because they possess the rudiments of limbs, nor parrots with men because they can mimic human speech ; if there are fishes which can fly and birds which are expert subaquatic swimmers, we are not, for all that, at a loss to tell a fish from a bird.

Let it be frankly confessed, however, that nature is greater than science—i.e., than man's thoughts about nature. We may follow her for a little distance and rejoice greatly that we seem so wise, but we are soon forced to relax our hold and drop behind ; nature's orbit is too high for us, and her methods—at first so eagerly and gladly grasped—become in the long run the despair of scientific thought. And thus while science is busy classifying and cataloguing for the sake of giving definition to our notions of things, it must, after all, be confessed there is a margin where types blend. If it be true that the human species derives in unbroken succession from animals of lower degree, it has never been discovered when or where the transition may take place—the “missing link” still escapes detection. As with the race so with the individual ; who shall say *when* the “ego,” the true self of each individual, first begins to act in that bodily frame which in the beginning belongs so completely to the *régime* of physical law. The new-born babe belongs, we say, to the *genus homo* because it is the offspring of man and will in time become a man, but at first it possesses as little individuality as any dumb creature—and as for the real self or ego, it is no more *there* than there is electricity in the electrical machine whose connexions have not yet been properly set up.

But the discussion of animalism runs precisely parallel with the discussion of automatism. For do we not draw the greatest possible difference between a man's conscious acts and the automatic workings of his mind ?—and yet,

if we look into the matter, we find it impossible to dis sever the voluntary from the involuntary, for the one grows out of the other, and arises, as the blade out of the soil, by that imperceptible process of nature which is veiled from the apprehension of man. What was once a distinct case of choice or volition has in course of time become an unconscious habit.

If however we will give our minds to broad principles of nature, we shall not be at a loss to estimate either animalism or automatism at its true value. Observing that lower, or more automatic and involuntary, functions are so deeply ingrained in organization—have sunk, in fact, to a sub-conscious level—we may not unreasonably infer that this has taken place *in order that* higher functions, running up to the summit of intelligence and the moral sentiment in man, should develop and have free course. Why, indeed, are the rudiments of anything whatever laboriously mastered but in order to pave the way for those further acquisitions and accomplishments which are considered worth having? Education of any kind is but the means to an end. So, too, is automatism a stepping-stone to higher ends. Or why does so great a part of the human economy go on, so to speak, by itself? Why can our brains think and function independently of our conscious selves, if it be not to set free the true self or ego for more important work—just as division of labour is one of the primary institutions of civilized countries in order that each one be set free to follow his bent, and so contribute his best to the common weal?

Whether we consider the growth of a single individual, or trace the same progression on a grander scale in the unfolding of animal types, we see the territory of automatism more and more invaded by the disturbing

influence of choice and deliberation. Shall we cry out upon this and call it retrogression because it entails the miseries of hesitation and suspense? Nay, rather do we see here a purpose and design which ever tends to subordinate that which is of less to that which is of greater value. If man acknowledges a just reasonableness in the operation of his own individual concerns, he may also credit nature, of which he forms a part, with the like quality of intention.

Yet one word more. This question of man's position in the scale of created beings would hardly be so hotly contested if the issues involved were not of surpassing moment; if, that is to say, it did not also lead to that other question, namely, as to whether there is anything in man's estate to show that he of all animals is the only one that does not perish, but has a right to look forward to a career beyond the bounds of earthly existence. Now to this inquiry it seems reasonable to rejoin somewhat as follows:—that looked at from the side of animality there is nothing whatever to warrant such a notion, but looked at from the spiritual (or truly human) point of view there is evidence enough for it. And, it may be added, *if you could look at a lower animal from the spiritual side*—i.e., from the side of history, philosophy, and religion—the exclusive claims of humanity in this respect would have neither place nor warrant; but, needless to say, in matters such as these the brute-creation have, as far as we know, no part or lot whatsoever: an admirable adaptation to the needs and necessities of an earthly habitat gives, so far as we can tell, a complete account of the philosophy of their life.

“If man ceases to exist when he disappears in the grave, you must be compelled to affirm that he is the

only creature in existence whom nature or providence has condescended to cheat by capacities for which there are no available objects.”\* Why do we uncover the head when the remains of the departed dead are borne along the street, why do we speak in hushed tones of those who have “gone before,” or why does a halo of sanctity shroud their memory? Death is not thus eloquent in the extinction of animal life; we are overcome by no such feelings in the presence of a dead dog. With Professor Jevons we are inclined to ask, “If men do act, feel and live *as if* they were not merely the brief products of a casual conjunction of atoms, but the instruments of a far-reaching purpose, are we to record all other phenomena and pass over these?”†

IV.—CHILDHOOD—ITS ROMANTIC AND DREAM-LIKE CHARACTER—  
ITS USES FOR GROWN-UP PEOPLE.

ON issuing from the antechamber of life a new-born child is little more than the bare possibility of the individual which is to be. And if we could divest our mind of the tender associations which naturally cling around that ungainly little lump of flesh, we should see in it scarcely anything more than the initial force of animality—an initial force which must be compounded with a multitude of other influences before it can be transmuted into the resultant personality of a rational and reflecting human being.

Our days begin pretty much as they close—they begin, that is to say, in a struggle for dear life. Whoever has been witness of the event will have been struck

\* *A Strange Story*, by Bulwer Lytton.

† *Principles of Science*, 1877, p. 769.

with the fact that birth is more like death than anything else. The air, henceforth to be the very symbol of life, is at first more like a draught of death ; and as it, for the first time, forces its way down the delicate, untried channels of respiration the infant seems to be choking and drowning in the ocean of life. "Like a mariner cast ashore by the angry waves a child at its birth lies prostrate on the earth, naked, speechless, destitute of all the aids of existence, torn from its mother's bosom by the efforts of nature."\*

In our concern for the chief sufferer when the hour of maternity is at hand we have no pity to spare for the sufferings of the new comer—but they must be great. The pangs of birth are followed by a collapse which carries off many a little one at the very moment when life's voyage is begun. But this anxious interval tided over—the frail bark once fairly launched—first troubles are lulled in the sweet forgetfulness of sleep ; and although the infant can never more return to the snug quarters it has just left, sleep transports it once again into "the isolated life which was its normal condition in the mother's womb, and which its organism has not yet lost the habit of."

And well for the infant that it passes most of its time in the sheltering oblivion of sleep, that the impressions and shocks of a strange world should not too rudely buffet so tender a frame. For if we reflect on the state of matters at this threshold stage of existence, we shall understand that the infant brain is almost wholly taken up with certain internal duties of the physical frame ; and no wonder the eye does not see well, nor the ear hear, when respiration and digestion are quite novel operations. If we could look into the infant's mind, or

\* Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, lib. v., ver. 223.

recall our own feelings at this remote period, we should doubtless be witness to the strangest medley of old and new sensations—a most helpless chaos of creative mists wandering through the poor little brain.

But sleep is the time for dreams ; the habitual state of little children may be said to be that of waking dreams. And it would seem to take a considerable time before this dream-like character of baby existence is lost ; some children, indeed, "spend years of difficulty in distinguishing between the subject and the object world."\* To a person who has been blind from birth, and whose sight is suddenly restored by a skilful operation, everything within the range of vision seems to be touching him and to form a part of himself. It is probably somewhat so with the dawnings of intelligence. The senses are first called into play ; thought and knowledge only follow after. There is plenty of perception, but hardly anything that can be called thought or conception. For sensation is not necessarily knowledge. The flower which opens to the morning sunshine, or the leaf of the *mimosa* (or sensitive-plant) which shrinks from the touch, gives evident signs of sensibility ; but if it may be affirmed that, to this extent, plants are susceptible of feeling, we are warranted in saying they do not *know* that they feel. Knowledge comes by reflection—it is one remove from the simplicity and unity of nature. It is only, that is to say, when the mind reflects upon its sensations that there arises the opposition in consciousness which tells me that this which I feel, hear, and see is not myself. "Even in the nineteenth month it is not yet clear how much belongs to one's own body," says Professor Preyer, commenting on the actions of his little boy, who on being asked to

\* *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, by Francis Galton.

give him his foot to put a shoe on had tugged hard at the member, evidently under the impression he could take it off and give it to his father.

This disintegrating action of the judgment may be illustrated by the snapping asunder of the dream-thread as soon as you begin to reflect. You dream, for instance, you are in the company of some departed relative ; in the midst of the joy of re-union it all at once occurs to you that a great sorrow has passed over your soul in connection with this loved one ; you reflect, and then you begin to see it is, after all, only a dream. But while it lasts a dream—or, indeed, any illusion—must be believed in ; to question is fatal ; it is slain by doubt.

Is it not somewhat so with little children, for they spend their days as in a waking dream ? Nature playing upon the human instrument first evokes its slumbering powers, till, in time, it shall give forth a strain of its own. But the original harmony is then lost, the dream is over, the illusion dispelled ; and man, as he recedes further from childhood's fairy garden, learns in many a bitter hour how far removed he is from the happy ignorance and *sans souci* of life's early morning.

“ Back on the past he turns his eye,  
Remembering with an envious sigh  
The happy dreams of youth.”

Judging from the reminiscence of early years we see how to the child's eye all seems vast and on a grand scale. If we revisit the scenes of our childhood, how poor and mean does it all seem—it has shrunk out of all remembrance, and we marvel that it once filled so great a place in our regard. In truth the child's point of view is quite different from the adult's : what is of not the least account to the one is a matter of the

greatest curiosity to the other. Watch a little child walking along the road ; you will see it constantly stopping to pick up little bits of stick or stone ; as it is so very small, everything appears big and of importance. You cannot help smiling when your little boy solicits your interest in his "treasures" : your grown-up mind cannot understand the value of this precious rubbish. All the same, herein lies the beginning of romance.

Children are born romancers. They are always saying to each other, "Let us pretend—let us pretend we're Indians, we're in a boat, in a railway train," and so on, as the case may be. When grown-up people *pretend*, it is generally because they have got some by-ends of their own to serve. Occasionally, however, grave grown-up people set themselves to *make-believe*, like the children do, that is to say, for the fun of it—for instance when they go to the play. Now the child's chief concern is play, so here we seem to have a link between youth and age.

But how comes it that little children are so given to romancing ? Because they know no better, you will say ; because they have so few facts to go upon. Well, inexperience is no doubt a factor in the case,—mothers who have the live article to nurse do not care for dolls, nor would a rocking-horse satisfy a master of the hounds—but there is something else besides mere poverty of equipment which causes children to make so much of so very little ; no mere negation could impart this ruddy glow to childish hearts—it is, namely, the freshness, the spontaneity which is, the world over, the livery and token of budding life.

True, the first blush of life's early dawn soon dies down, and fades into the light of common day. All too soon comes old Time with his sobering hand to dull the

keen edge of our relish ; while his twin-brother, Experience, by innumerable batterings, puts a cuticle round our psyche, which shelters us from the too pressing attentions of Dame Nature, and lets individuality grow. But to nature's appeal the child yields an ungrudging response, without hesitation and without reserve. The little mind, previously a blank, or nearly so—and not yet cumbered with the thousand *arrière pensées* which beset the adult, and mar the plenitude of sense perception—mirrors with an effect unknown in later years the passing shows of sense.

But the child's mind is not only a mirror, it is also a little hot-bed of impulse and desire. Now desire requires an object, and the only materials of thought at this very unfurnished stage of existence are these same passing shows of sense ; hence the will-ability of these little empty-heads is largely employed in reproducing what is shown or told them.

It is a mistake to suppose children are original ; on the contrary they are plagiarists to the manner born ; their art consists in making the very most of what little they have got, and serving it up in fancy's fairy garb. The theatricals of the nursery are but reproductions of what is going on down-stairs ; and, *Like papa, like mamma* is the motto inscribed upon every baby's banner. Nature herself is too prosaic for such flighty little persons, and has to be coaxed by all manner of tricks. Baby must take a toy to bed to send him to sleep ; his morning bath does duty for various marine purposes from fishes up to ships ; his socks must be drawn on to the tune of "Little Bo Peep." "When my cousin and I took our porridge of a morning," says that prince of writers on things pertaining to youth, Mr. R. L. Stevenson, "we had a device to enliven the

course of the meal. He ate his with sugar, and explained it to be a country continually buried under snow. I took mine with milk, and explained it to be a country suffering gradual inundation. You can imagine us exchanging bulletins ; how here was an island still unsubmerged, here a valley not yet covered with snow ; what inventions were made, how his population lived in cabins on perches, and travelled on stilts, and how mine was always in boats ; how the interest grew furious as the last corner of safe ground was cut off on all sides and grew smaller every moment ; and how, in fine, the food was of altogether secondary importance, and might even have been nauseous, so long as we seasoned it with our dreams." \*

They make so much of so very little—that is why child-life is like a dream. We all do it in dreaming : the rain gently patterning on the pane we magnify into a wild hurricane garnished with all kinds of harrowing incidents ; the knock at our chamber door becomes the tumult of the battle-field ; the firelight gently glowing in the grate, a conflagration.

Again, in dreaming we take everything in good faith, for what it seems. So do children. " If you want to persuade your child that he was born under a cabbage, that Hop-o'-my-Thumb had seven-leagued boots, that the sky is peopled with angels, that under the earth there are howling demons, that garrets and chimneys are full of ghosts, you have only to look as if you believed all this seriously yourself and he will be convinced at once." † " Nothing can stagger a child's faith," says the writer first quoted ; " he accepts the clumsiest substitutes and can swallow the most staring incongruities. The chair he has just been besieging as a castle, or valiantly

\* *Virginibus Puerisque*, p. 237.

† *The First Three Years of Childhood*, by Bernard Perez, p. 86.

cutting to the ground as a dragon, is taken away for the accommodation of a morning visitor, and he is nothing abashed." Upon such vain shows and deceptions do children fix their minds, and what is more, keep them fixed ; for, as before said, your dream is spoiled the moment you begin to reflect and think about it. "However that may be, Tom was amphibious—(we quote from that most delicious of all fairy tales, *The Water Babies*)—and what was better still he was clean. For the first time in his life he felt how comfortable it was to have nothing on him but himself. But he only enjoyed it : he did not know it, or think about it ; just as you enjoy life and health, and yet never think about being alive and healthy ; and may it be long before you have to think about it."\*

Perhaps, after all, little children are wise in their generation and know their business best. They walk in Wonderland; and conjuring—which sets grown-up people beating their brains, and makes them perplexed and uncomfortable—comes quite natural to *them* ; it is kindred to their art. Perhaps Thoreau was right when he said, "Children who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure."

Indeed it is a queer mythical kind of world children live in ; fact and fiction seem to have changed places ; nor can it be expected that a passion for concocting stories shall go along with a very punctilious regard for matter-of-fact truth. "The child does not know what is true, what is actual," said an intelligent mother who had made a study of her little son's mind ; "I never can depend on his statements, except, as it appears, when he

\* Kingsley's *Water Babies*, p. 92.

tells what he has had to eat. If riding is spoken of, e.g., he has a vivid picture of riding in his mind. To-day, when I asked him, 'Did you see papa ride?' he answered, 'Yes, indeed, papa rode away off into the woods.' Yet his father had not gone to ride at all."\* Thus story-telling becomes synonymous with fibbing, and without any *malice-prepense* a child shall become the most barefaced little prevaricator imaginable.

Probably, however, there is generally a vein of mischief lurking at the bottom. In the economy of child life make-believe and fun always go together; they are inseparables. The children's drama is always comedy; and even when playing death-beds and funerals it is with difficulty they can keep their countenances.

Is it because they have travelled only such a little way from their port of entry, that to these *débutants* of the threshold life seems such a perpetual joke, or is it the necessary result of setting out with the persuasion that one's chief end and aim consists in romping and poking fun? At any rate, we may rest content that it is so.

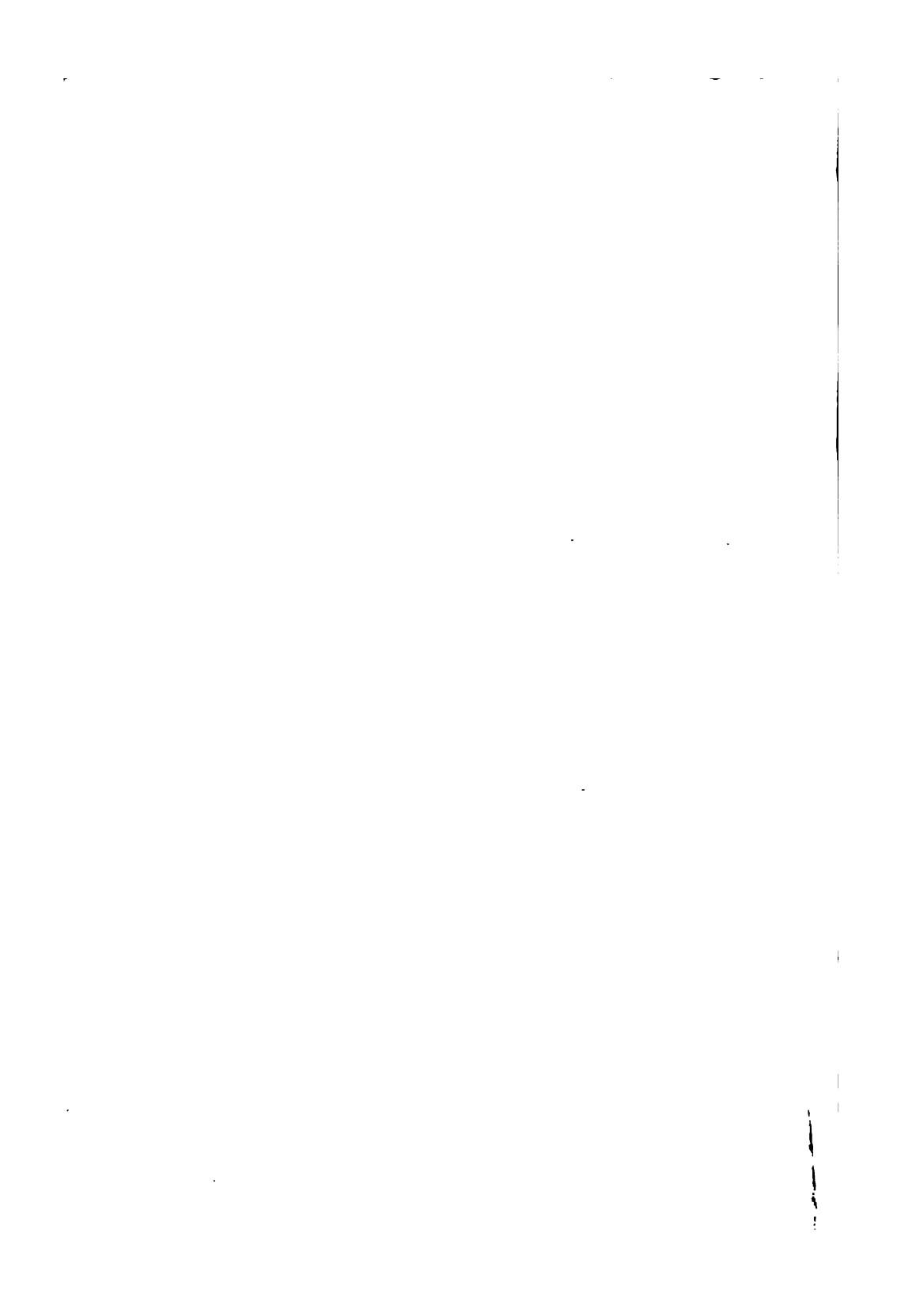
"A dreary place would be this earth  
Were there no little people in it,  
The song of life would lose its mirth  
Were there no children to begin it."

The presence of little children, with their inveterate turn for humour, is a wholesome corrective for the pruderies and pedantries of grown-up wiseacres. We cannot afford to dispense with humour. It is highly desirable that the grim realities of life be glossed with a little humour now and then, and consequently these merry rogues, always bent on amusement and bubbling over with fun, may for once be our instructors. Children are most useful in educating their parents, and homes cannot be said to be complete without them.

\* Preyer's *Development of the Intellect*, 1889, p. 269.

We elderly people who build ourselves houses, think we know how to enjoy them best, but it is not so ; it is the little folk who make the most of the houses they live in. What a fund of enjoyment and fascination lies in the *staircase*, for instance. You and I use it as a mere thing of convenience, and do not give it a thought. Not so the child ; from the loving way a little child will hang about the staircase you may be sure this very sober article of household furniture has entered deeply into its romance of life. A childless house ! What a pity it will be embalmed in no little hearts to live in the memory as the dear familiar spot from which new voyageurs set out on life's long route.

But if we commiserate childless houses, what shall we say of childless husbands and wives ? What is the man who has never been a father ! What is the man who has never been christened by baby lips, "Papa" ; whose ear has never been ravished by the first sweet, hesitating utterances of his little child ; whose heart has not been warmed by that touching appeal, as if it would say, "I am yours, love me, give me a place in your heart, open your arms to me ; you see I do not know much as yet, I have only just arrived, but already I think of you ; I am one of the family, I shall eat at your table and bear your name !" Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that people are not properly grown up till they have had children. The advent of the first-born puts a barrier between married folk and their youth like nothing else can. In our thought and care for the little one we acknowledge that we have already crossed from one generation to another ; we have bid good-bye to our former selves ; the torch of life is being passed on by us, and, as time drifts, we become at length reconciled to leave it thus in other hands.



V.

*ON THE RELATION OF THE SEXES.*

*"God made you, but you marry yourself. Once you  
are married, there is nothing else left for you, not even  
suicide, but to be good."*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

V.

## On the Relation of the Sexes.

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### I.—WOMAN'S WORK AND POSITION—IS IT NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL?

“I OFTEN wish I were not so cowardly,” said she. “Ah, do not wish you were other than you are. In tact, in quickness of perception, in delicacy of feeling, in the unerring justice with which you women instinctively arrive at conclusions which men only reach through circuitous paths of cumbrous logic, you stand alone. Steadfastness, patience, tenderness, pity, these are the jewels of your crown—that crown which the strong-minded woman despises in her ambitious endeavour to attain to male virtues that in her are simply detestable.” “One may admire her,” continued the speaker, referring to a mutual acquaintance, a lady of “advanced” opinions—“one may admire her, but what one loves is a tender, trembling little woman, doubting of herself and looking up to man as her natural guide and protector. Don’t you see how well this attitude becomes you, but also how admirably it works. When you are womanly you make us manly; these touching and gentle appeals stir all the depths of our buried tenderness and bring it to the surface.”\*

Now is this a fair description, is this a fair picture of

\* *A Week in a French Country House*, by Mrs. Sartorius.

the relation of the sexes ? Is it true that "the position of man is to stand, of woman to lean" ? Or is this all false and forced—the tradition of a dark and degenerate age, the fruit of tyranny and convention—and should we desiderate a greater *rapprochement* of the sexes ; that *she* should cease to look up to him as a god of strength and wisdom ; that *he* should give up regarding her as an ornament to be kept under a glass shade, as something adorable and therefore not fit for the rough business of life ; or else—strange antithesis !—as a being whose aspirations are not supposed to soar above the broom and dust-pan ?

Let us see how the matter stands. We do not inquire of a woman, What is she ? We do not ask a girl, What are you going to be ? Woman's career in life seems cut out from the beginning ;—to prepare food, to look after the linen, to keep house, and to mind the children, are not manly occupations ; they fall, apparently from the nature of the case, to the side of the woman.

But to know *what he is going to be* is a matter of the first importance for every young man entering life. And why ? Because he is expected to earn his own livelihood, to support himself, and eventually, in all probability, to provide for his family. Do we expect this of the woman ? No. She looks forward to *being* supported ; in other words, she looks forward to marriage as her career ; and this being so she falls a natural and willing prey (if we may be allowed the expression) to the other sex. But in a world like ours nothing is to be had for nothing ; if one work for another, that other is, to this extent, made dependent (a fact which becomes unpleasantly plain to the well-to-do classes when their inferiors strike for better pay) ; while woman enjoys the advantage

of drawing her sustenance from some one else instead of having to work for it herself, she is thereby placed in a dependent position. Yet, after all, the question arises, which is really the master and which the slave—the husband who toils the livelong day in some pokey little office, or the wife whose leisure is purchased by all this drudgery? But, in truth, to each are their appointed tasks. If men have their business or professional work, to women belongs the task—by no means a light one—of guiding the household *régime*, of superintending the concerns of the little folk, of solving the problems of the counter (that is to say, shopping)—room enough, one would think, to satisfy any woman's ambition for work.

But suppose the little ones already fledged—servants so reliable that the house goes like clockwork and without the intervention of its tutelary genius, circumstances so easy as to reduce to a vanishing point the obligations of spending and the problems of the counter—is there nothing more earnest for women than dressing and paying calls, or lolling over works of fiction? Let the lives of Florence Nightingale, of Octavia Hill, of Annie Macpherson, and many another noble-hearted *unmarried* woman make reply.

Woman was born a ministering angel, and if she do not find employment within the domestic circle there is plenty of work to be done outside it. For it is in the exercise of those especially womanly virtues (which are also the cardinal virtues of Christianity)—faith, hope, charity—that woman finds her true calling. And this brings us to the gist of the whole matter, which is this: that the difference between the sexes is a natural and not an artificial one, a fact of nature and not an invention born of the selfishness and tyranny of the stronger sex.

Now in handling this subject it were well to bear in mind a consideration—already familiar to the reader of these pages—which may be expressed by saying that nature's chief care is the race rather than the individual; that the life and health of the race is, in this enlarged sense, of first importance; and that if private interests clash with this supreme object they must be sacrificed, as indeed we see they are.

It were well, therefore, if those who advocate a greater community of pursuits and interests between the sexes would bear clearly in mind that sexual differentiation, being an institution of nature, it was never meant that men and women should be alike. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive why animals and men should ever have been divided into sexes twain if the difference involved were not to serve some useful end, as may be seen, e.g., in the robust progeny of *bisexual* plants, and the efforts of nature (already alluded to) to secure thereby the more vigorous type of offspring.

For this difference in the animal economy is not confined to one particular organ or function, but it tinctures and pervades the whole system. It might have been thought a differentiation in the organs set apart for the sexual function would be the starting point of the whole matter, but it is not so. For if the human embryo be examined in the first few weeks of existence it can be quite well made out whether the coming individual is to be male or female before any difference is to be detected in the organs aforesaid, these being up to the eighth week precisely the same in either sex.

But for the attestation of a truth which stands open and confessed in the light of day it seems hardly necessary to pry in secret places or appeal to out-of-the-way instances—except that it is well in this matter, as

in others, that common sense be steadied by the support of technical knowledge—for the point is, in truth, susceptible of a very simple demonstration, as we will now proceed to show.

The air we breathe is our life : it is the very breath of life, for without breathing we would quickly cease to be. Now it is easy to see that the two sexes breathe very differently. The rising and falling of the chest, so conspicuous in women, is hardly at all noticeable in men, and, in its association with feeling, we have perhaps come to regard it as a peculiarly feminine charm. So far the difference in question will be acknowledged by all ; as a matter of fact it is patent to all—but now comes in the use of technical knowledge, for its real significance is not disclosed by a look ; it is indeed deceptive, for it would seem as if the woman took more air into the lungs than is the case in the opposite sex. Precisely the reverse is, however, in reality the case. For it is the abdominal or diaphragmatic respiration of the male which furnishes a larger supply of oxygen than is possible by the mere expansion of the chest. Now the force of our life depends on the amount of oxygen we inhale ; the better breather makes the better worker. If a woman engage in manual labour, such as working in the fields, she must take longer than her fellow-labourer to accomplish the same piece of work, because her physical frame does not admit of as large draughts of oxygen as his. When women are employed in bearing burdens—a familiar sight in foreign lands—they prefer carrying the weight on the head rather than in the arms, and this is a natural instinct. For since the pectoral muscles, which move the arm in holding and carrying, are attached to the chest (and women breathe solely by expanding the chest), the exertion of manual

labour incommodes their breathing far more than is the case in the other sex.

But heavy work for the weaker sex seems plainly against the natural fitness of things, so that here, at all events, the order of nature can be claimed on the side of the "woman's rights" programme.

It may next be observed, however—and this again is to score a point on the other side—that a good supply of oxygen is as necessary for brain-work as it is for the exercise of joints and muscles. Now it appears, from the most recent investigations, that there is an average difference of five ounces between the male and the female brain in favour of the former; moreover the difference is qualitative as well as quantitative, for that part of the cerebral mass which is the proper organ of mind is more vascular, has a richer blood supply, in the one case than in the other. From this it follows that the corresponding supply of oxygen for the male brain must be larger than that required in the female, and, consequently, the more ample provision in the respiratory apparatus is seen to be in connection with the ampler endowments of the male psychically as well as physically.

From all which it would appear that the fond desire to make up the missing five ounces is but, as one might say, an impossible dream of Newnham or Girton. It could never be accomplished—unless measures could also be taken for completely overhauling and recasting the bodily framework of woman in a way which would be detrimental to her maternal functions, and, therefore, contrary to the plan of nature.

## II.—NATURE'S CALL TO THE NUPTIAL TIE.

BUT supposing, for sake of argument, the impossible were possible, or supposing, rather, the type of womanhood could (as it can) be approximated to that of men of culture—how would it work? An answer, which is not a hopeful one, comes from across the Atlantic, where “a prominent woman physician of Boston has freely expressed her conviction that the great superiority in culture of so many of the young girls of to-day over that of the average men who go early into business exerts one very bad effect, namely, that these young girls do not want to marry such men. . . . How on earth could Lucy or Fanny or Alice consent to marry such a man? is heard from many a curling lip among a bevy of young girls. Only think of the free and happy times she had at the art school, in the conservatory of music, in the reading club, or out sketching by the lake and among the mountains. Why, the fellow does not know Beethoven from a street organ-grinder, would yawn with weariness in the richest picture-gallery in the world, and see nothing in the most glorious forest but so many thousand feet of lumber! I'd rather be Titania and fondle and kiss an ass's ear.”\*

Now what will Dame Nature say to this? That these superior young ladies should withdraw from love's arena, leaving it to their more stupid sisters to wed and become the mothers of the rising generation, is a sorry thing for the race. Mr. Oscar Wylde, when in those parts, was assured by an eminent Bostonian that in the twentieth century the whole culture of his country would be in petticoats (query bifurcated?) The forecast

\* *Boston Herald.*

is not altogether a happy one ; and these learned maidens might do well to remember that plants under cultivation lose their natural uses—double flowers may look better no doubt, but use has been sacrificed to ornament ; they are sterile, have ceased to be, i.e., what nature intended they should be.

But this is to touch upon that which is of vital importance every way in the life of men and women, and especially of women. “Female dragon-flies with their bright metallic colours may often be noticed reposing on plants in the sunshine attracting ever and anon the attention of some passing male, who staying his course, remains for a while as seized with an ecstasy, suspended over their charms, like the hawk marking his quarry, and seeming as if dazed by the glow of pigment beneath him.” And again, “observe how the glow-worm’s love-illumined form on her mossy couch is a beacon to the vagrant male, and that the light is present only in the season when the sexes are destined to meet, and is strikingly more vivid at the very moment when the meeting takes place.”\*

May we not see in this episode in the life of the woods the symbol of a higher meaning, for are not love’s tactics everywhere the same ? Is it not the law of nature that the female shall attract by her charms, is it not a truth of universal recognition that the unlike characters of either sex should for ever be surprisingly interesting to the other ? “When you are womanly you make us manly,” is man’s call to his fair partner ; while she replies, “Surely you and I will be very happy ; my hopes are centred on and in you ; you must and shall and will do finely.”

And if we trace love’s idyl in those lower levels of

\* *Insect Variety.*

animated nature which form the vestibule to man, we may observe that the whole gamut of sensuous pleasures—in sight and scent and sound—has been struck by nature in her call to the nuptial tie; to the end that her great universe of being shall continue rolling down the steeps of time. The magnificence of *chantidere*, the peacock's pride of plume, is no mere idle display of ornament: it all has its place in the strictly utilitarian scheme of nature. It is at the mating period, in spring namely, that the cock-bird is in his most brilliant colours; it is just then that his song is at its best. Who has not heard the male bird pouring forth a flood of melody while, hard by, sits the partner of his cares patiently hatching her brood?—but when the task is accomplished he straightway ceases his song. That the melody of her mate is not without its influence in moving the mother bird in the fulfilment of maternal duties may be gathered from a remark of Buffon to the effect that “hen canaries if separated from the cock-birds so as not to see or hear them very seldom lay, but oftenest drop their egg when melted by the song or view of the males.”

The connection of the voice with the function in question, and as forming a notable difference betwixt the two sexes, is very manifest. “The bellow of the bull, the loud and sonorous neigh of the stallion, the deep voice of the ram, the spirited notes of the common cock and the song of male singing-birds are all in remarkable contrast with the analogous sounds of the female.” The voice of the eunuch is said to be singularly shrill and piercing, or, in a word, effeminate in character, and a corresponding change is observed to occur in all animals that are castrated; while everybody is familiar with the curious alteration or “breaking” of the voice in youths, which is, in fact, the herald of approaching manhood.

## III.—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEX.

WHEN we consider the many points of difference between the sexes, and that naturally *das Weib kein Mann ist*, it seems only fair to give such matters of fact the weight which is their due. As regards women's fondness for dress, for instance, men might perhaps mitigate the harshness of their judgment if they would reflect that it arises from distinctly natural causes. Personal adornment belongs by right, as one might say, to the female sex ; for it is this sex rather than the other which is distinguished by its personal attractions. "When nature divided humanity into male and female the section was not precisely a bisection," was one of Schopenhauer's many shrewd remarks touching intelligence, and (needless to say) in favour of the male. Yet, as far as personal beauty is concerned, the balance is surely just the other way. It needs only to compare the graceful contours of the feminine *torso* with the unshapely frame of man—with its flattened bust and absence of *taille*—to see that it is so. It is not necessary to sum up the whole catalogue of feminine charms to enforce the point ; a glance is enough to see that a man has "no figure," as a woman would say.

And to this truth social usage pays tribute. For while he who betrays a liking for jewellery or bestows great attention on his personal appearance is by common consent voted a conceited fop, a taste for decoration is not thought unbecoming in womankind. No one disputes woman's judgment in matters of attire ; she remains sole connoisseur of what constitutes a correct "make up" ; while a fine show of jewellery on wrist and bosom is regarded by male relatives with unmistakable

feelings of complacency ;—regret the hole in their pockets as they may, they would not have it otherwise.

And does not the very fashion of woman's dress—its *non-bifurcated* character—proclaim her more limited and stationary sphere in life ? Locomotion is primarily a fact of the nether extremities ; to confine these in petticoats is to lay an embargo on travelling. Those rare cases of famous lady-travellers, or those women of a Tartar race who ride astride on horseback, must be regarded as exceptions to the rule. Are not the corset-wearing dandies of Her Majesty's service also exceptions to the rule ?

But, leaving externals for internals, let us refer now to another diversity of character which is apt to escape the notice it deserves. As touching muscular endowment woman is naturally the feebler sex ; yet in the exercise of one muscular organ in particular she has acquired a proverbial, if unenviable, *renommée*—that organ is the tongue. From time immemorial woman has been branded as the talkative sex, the chatterer-in-chief—an opinion preserved in the classical, if ungallant, epigram of the Rhodean poet, Xenocritus :

“ Happy the Cicadas live  
Since they all have voiceless wives.”

Now, if there is truth in this, it is but a half-truth, and the observation (always so loudly trumpeted by the other sex) has served to hide the fact, manifest enough on reflection, that it is precisely in man the tongue has a field of action unknown to his fair partner. It is computed that it takes, on an average, about thirty hours' talking to pass a bill through Parliament. But for this tangled web of political discussion, for polemics, for dialectics, for Tusculan disputations, and the like,

women have comparatively little faculty or taste. They do not care for talk as an instrument for the discovery of truth.

If the woolsack could be won without passing through the intermediary stages of a lawyer's career woman might perhaps aspire to that pinnacle of fame ; if her physical frame could stand the strain, she might sit *in banco*—for her mother-wit could outvie the ponderous wisdom of many a judge—as advocate or special pleader she might also figure with remarkable success, but as combining the two elements of advocate and judge she is altogether out of the running.

Now this is just what is so noticeable in the other sex—the tendency a man has to reason and discuss with himself ; to split his personality into two halves, which assume two sides—for and against, plaintiff and defendant, advocate and judge. Nor can the trains of thought involved in this mental situation be carried on without the aid of the tongue ; and if men have no one else to talk to, they can be heard talking to themselves ; it is not so much a soliloquy as a dialogue between the two terms of the divided “*ego*.”

To act from impulse is commonly regarded a peculiarity of the female character. Women feel and act without experiencing the want of forging the intermediary intellectual link of speech, external or internal. That is to say, woman's talk does not take this deeply utilitarian turn ; it is ornamental rather than useful—an amusement *pour passer le temps*—rather than for the serious business of life. In the art of conversation—which is, in reality, an art of recreation—women have always excelled ; witness the *salons* of the First Empire ; the *femmes d'esprit* who adorned them were at once the offspring and the enrichers of that language which

stands unrivalled as the medium for light conversation. Adepts in this happy knack and sprightliness of speech, women are more than a match for men. Thus they have won their position as the queens of society and leaders of fashion ; and not only so, but wherever there is a domestic circle it is woman's *métier* to enrich the amenities of life, to create a wholesome diversion from the tyranny of money, politics, and trade—to save men, in short, from being doctrinaire, pedantic and *shoppy*.

The greater delicacy of outward feature in woman has its counterpart in a corresponding elegance and delicacy of mind. If women have not excelled in the higher walks of art it is not that they are unartistic ; on the contrary, every woman is an *artiste*, for every woman naturally and without premeditation or effort brings into the conduct of life the principles of art and beauty. Naturally, woman has an eye for fitness and taste ; hers is the *savoir vivre* which is so essential to pleasant social intercourse ; hers is the *savoir faire* so necessary to guide the household ménage, and (despite signs of revolution below stairs) to steer it clear of mutiny and disgrace.

And yet it is not unusual to hear the gentler sex rated for its lack of intelligence. We remember a married man who, in commenting on an unlucky question which had been asked him while explaining the mechanism of some scientific instrument, said it was " just such a question as one's wife might have put." We think women can quite well afford to return the charge of stupidity by retorting that there are many predicaments in life in which a man would be perfectly helpless if it were not for the readier wit of wife or sister, which will prompt him what to do or say, or avoid doing or saying.

While, it is true, female intelligence rarely takes the practical turn of discovery or invention, stupidity can scarcely be averred of the sex which is noted for quickness of perception and refinement of sense. While keeping up an animated conversation a woman will have wits to spare for a thorough inventory of what her interlocutor has on—she will be able to give you a full and detailed account of it all afterwards. Mr. Romanes says he has known a lady who, while passing another lady at full speed in a carriage “could analyse her toilette from her bonnet to her shoes, and be able to describe not only the fashion and quality of the stuff, but also to say if the lace were real or only machine-made.” After this marvel of quickness in “taking in,” who will say women have no brains ?

But it is not accomplishments such as these which establish woman’s claim to our best regard. ’Twas not of smartness of intellect or nimbleness of speech the poet was thinking when he closed the “greatest of modern poems” with the line : *Das Ewig Weibliche zieht uns hinan*; rather was it those noble qualities of heart which we associate with all that is most truly *womanly* which caused his pen to trace these memorable words.

And if this is so, is it not just possible that nature has not been so foolish after all in creating them “ male and female after their own kind,” and that the foolishness would be rather on the side of those who aim at effacing from the sexes their natural diversity of character ?

When, therefore, we are asked to join the holy crusade of the “levelling up” of woman to man’s estate, and to regard a new era as dawning because a certain young lady wins a first prize in mathematics at the London University, and another comes out eighth Wrangler at Cambridge, we are inclined to ask, first of

all, whether it is quite certain that the manly type is really the best type of mankind ?

We have pointed out certain respects in which women are superior to men ; it may be permitted now to point out—without disparagement to the ladies aforesaid—particulars in which the balance is undoubtedly the other way. It is uncontested that the intellectual advance of the race depends upon that sex which is possessed of the greatest mental calibre—is mainly dependent, *i.e.*, on the man ; hence, too, is the government upon his shoulders, and the very existence of the State may be said to depend on the might of his strong right arm. But granting that man is both mentally and physically woman's superior, this still leaves the question open as to which is the better sex—better as human judgments go. For power of intellect and force of muscle does not suitably gauge the excellence of man. We have been at some pains to show that brain-knowledge and brute-force is not the one thing needful, at least not for the individual ; were it so, men might perhaps have some reason for regarding their wives and families as an *encumbrance*, but as the matter stands they have no business to adopt any such view. And so judging, perhaps the palm must, after all, be awarded to man's fair consort. Woman has her weaknesses, but has not man his vices ? If women are silly and vain, is it better to be brutal and profane ? Is it better to be *learned, ambitious, or great* than to be *loving, gentle, and good* ?

It has been said woman's virtues are born of weakness, man's virtues of strength. Be it so ; this still leaves altogether on one side the question of betterness. Which is the more admirable character, the *manly man*, or the *womanly woman* ? Who shall say ?

The mortality amongst the nurses of the London hospitals has been quoted at the high figure of forty per cent., but a mortality of forty per cent. is “tenfold greater than that which is inflicted by the bullets upon any field of battle.” Now which is the more gallant act —to spike a gun amid a storm of bullets, or to brave the deadly fever in some foul alley of a London slum? *That* is pluck, animal-like in character and desperate in its instincts; *this* is devotion—humane, spiritual, Christian. Which is better, manly prowess or womanly devotion?

One of the most notable examples (because connected with one of the most notable figures in literature) of the unpleasant consequences of a woman’s assuming the mental attitude of the other sex is to be found in the *Life and Correspondence of George Eliot*. A forced and persistent effort at what Matthew Arnold used to delight in calling “flexibility of thinking” bore fruit, it must be confessed, in some very unlovely traits of character. Self-assertion, scorn, disbelief—what qualities for a woman! And we are inclined to think Mr. Hutton hits the mark when he gives his opinion that George Eliot “intended her work as an authoress to be expiatory of, or at least to do all that was possible to counterbalance, the effect of her own example,”\* in regard at any rate to the one piece of conduct which is most calculated to shock womanly feeling—we mean her irregular union with Mr. Lewes.

These graceless and forced qualities of a noble character may well make us hesitate to embrace the views of certain advanced social reformers. There is doubtless much to be said for the higher education of women; there is doubtless a crying need to save women from “a

\* *Modern Guides to English Thought in Matters of Faith*, by Richard Holt Hutton, p. 289.

lifelong sham in which too many of them exist with emptiness in their hearts, paint on their cheeks and scandal on their tongues"; but let woman's ideal be a womanly and not a man's ideal, for a mannish woman is a most objectionable creature, not a whit less so than an effeminate man. There is no need to make men out of women, any more than to imagine that woman is an imperfect edition of man, and is to be classed therefore, not with men, but with children.

"The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink  
Together, dwarf'd or god-like, bond or free."

In marriage, especially, it is desirable that the sexes should meet on an equal footing. It is alike senseless and mischievous—and, we may add, useless—that one of the parties to the contract should be enjoined to *obey* the other; how much misunderstanding and misery this survival of feudalism (or, shall we say, of Orientalism?) has imparted to wedded life it would be difficult to say. True, there is a certain sense in which the woman is subject to the man, but that is natural and spontaneous, and stands therefore on a wholly different footing to this *legalized* subjection, which we hold to be something repugnant to the true spirit of the marriage union, at least as we understand it in the present day. It cannot but operate to mask the true relation of the sexes—which are attracted to each other by sentiments of mutual admiration and interest. But love is apt to play high jinks and make havoc of sober counsels, and to this slippery subject we must now turn our attention, for—

"C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour  
Que fait la monde à la ronde."

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IV.—COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE—CHARACTER OF THE TENDER  
PASSION—WHY IT IS ILLUSORY.

“As for love,” wrote Disraeli in a letter to his sister, “all my friends who married for love and beauty either beat their wives or live apart from them. This is literally the case. I may commit many follies in life, but I never intend to marry for ‘love,’ which I am sure is a guarantee for infelicity.”\*

Men are under a delusion when they marry. They imagine they are going to possess themselves of a solace for every mood, a toy evermore at the beck and call of their desire, a musical-box always wound up to discourse sweet music. Not a bit of it; they are entering upon the most onerous of tasks, and the other is all an impossible dream which love whispers in the suitor’s greedy ear. For, in truth, it is love’s office to deceive, or few would marry, and the race would suffer, perhaps die out;—and what odds, we hear some one cry from the pessimist camp.

“My lord duke,” said the Bishop of Lincoln at the recent marriage ceremony of the heir to one of England’s proudest titles—“My lord duke, happiness is not to be found in wealth, in the noble rank you bear; the heart of man cannot be filled with such things. Love is that for which the heart yearns, and there lies your happiness. Begin by loving each other; live for each other.”

To have said *make it your duty* to love and live for each other would have been to strike a note hardly in keeping with wedding favours and marriage bells, yet this is what it really amounts to. An earth-born passion—and such is the love of man for the woman of his

\* Lord Beaconsfield’s *Correspondence*, p. 20.

choice—needs no prompting, awaits no one's bidding before it shall cleave to the object of its desire ; but if not sustained by a heavenlier flame—if it do not climb somewhat into the higher latitudes of man's spiritual needs, and taste of the diet provided there—love shall go a-sorrowing ; without a dash of self-surrender in it Hymen's draught is at best a bitter-sweet.

You see women filling the churches and hold this a sign of weakness. Not so. If men can be brave and upright without any pronounced attachment to religious dogma, an irreligious woman (we make bold to say it, despite the known snares of priesthood for the feminine mind) is an unsightly object, and will make an unsafe partner. Her very love shall be the occasion of alteration, wrath and distress.

Imagine a married woman with no religion to fall back upon, but whose soul is wrapped up in her husband, centred in her conception of what he should be, and suppose now she be disappointed in this her *beau-ideal*, she is wild ; there is no place for forgiveness ; there is nothing to soften the harshness of her judgment ; there is no angel of mercy in the background waiting to come forward and sustain love's flickering flame.

For love is not that *charity which suffereth long* or it would not be so quickly hurled from its high estate. Like all passion it is exacting, unreflecting, uncompromising ; like all passion it will do anything to gain its ends. " Whate'er I did was done for thee, my love," says Marguerite to Faust, referring, in that last harrowing interview in prison, to the crimes to which her passion had driven her. " No man sacrifices his honour even for one he loves," says Helmer in Ibsen's *Doll's House*. " Millions of women have done that," retorts his wife with a woman's instinct.

No place for forgiveness, did we say? Well, sometimes love's idol is broken and yet the passion recovers itself, not so much for the sake of the other as by reason of its own inextinguishable flame. It is this masterful character which gives love its fickle and inconstant mood; its surprises, its terrible revulsions of feeling, which crush and strain, and sometimes break the heart, if religion do not intervene to temper its intolerable heat.

"My object," said Count Tolstoi, in writing that last novel of his which was never destined to see the light—"My object is to fill the reader with horror at the result of taking romantic love *au sérieux*." And, truth to say, there is no knowing to what lengths the Love-god shall not hound on his votaries. Torn by the wild frenzy of disappointed love, a man shall himself become the slayer of that dear form he once covered with his kisses. "There is no other way than this," cried Virginius as he plunged his sword in the heart of his hapless child; the like desperate counsels seem ever to attend the issues of unhallowed passion—for such is the anguish of unrequited love that men and women have welcomed death itself to ease them of its insupportable pang.

Do we turn from these unlovely aspects of love's drama to contemplate its gentler scenes, its treacherous nature still stands revealed. When the feasting and excitement of the wedding-day is over, when well-wishing friends have at length retired, leaving the happy pair—the centre of all this pleasing bustle—at last alone, and when the man clasps his bride to his bosom with the words "Thou art mine," he forgets in that first sweet delirium of love's consummation that he is giving utterance to an impossible dream. So runs love's idyl, it is true, but it is a mistake to suppose another fellow-

creature can be thus appropriated and possessed ; and a man soon discovers that matrimony, instead of being an extension of his authority and ownership, is just the opposite. He has thereby forfeited something of his freedom ; to marry is to go shares in a joint partnership ; to find a partner is to find a master.

And yet this masterful trait is a perfectly natural ingredient in the man's character. The lust of power is fixed in him—as coyness in the woman. You put a whip into a boy's hand, but you give the girl a doll. Is not this symbolic of man's thirst to exercise dominion ?

In rude times the wife was captured and carried off by force. The tactics of courtship have changed, but man is still the aggressor. He thinks of *marrying*, the woman of *being or getting married*. He seeks and proposes, she waits and accepts. It is he that leads her to the altar, not she him ; it is she and not he that loses the old patronymic and goes henceforward by the name of the other. George Eliot somewhere says a man in his marital relations never quite loses his sense of *prey*. This is probably true ; in the passion of the love embrace there would seem to be a *suspicion* of the old violence still surviving ; it is the pleased and willing subjection of his fair consort which crowns the situation and makes all the difference between true love and its guilty counterfeit.

We speak as a man. It would certainly be interesting to learn from the *other side* the secret of love's magic spell, but this may not be. It is men who have written and sung of love, not women. Nay, what woman that has ever loved would care to analyse her feelings ; what woman that has ever loved could lay bare her passion and proclaim it to the world ?—'twere an outrage on the sanctities of the heart. Instead of

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this women bury it in their bosom, or tell it to the night air when no one is near—

“ Und sprich wie redet Liebe  
Sie redet nicht sie liebt.”

With men it is different. A man must always be assuring himself of his happiness, making it an object of thought ; talking of it (to himself if to nobody else) ; reasoning about it. Not so woman. She is content to dwell in the unreasoning, perhaps unreasonable, belief of her joy. “ Although you are unkind to me,” she says, “ that makes no difference in my love.” It is a matter of faith, of inward conviction—an inspiration that needs no outward prop, a fascination which asks no questions.

Probably no one who has witnessed Mrs. Kendal in the *Ladies' Battle* will have failed to be struck with that touching commentary on love's unreason. A comtesse of the Second Empire shelters a “ suspect,” who is “ wanted” by the police ; and her efforts at outwitting the officers of the law are sharpened by love's resources, for she loves this man with all her heart. It soon transpires, however, that the Comtesse d'Autreval has a rival in the person of her lovely niece, who at this juncture happens to be an inmate of the castle. The rivalry of the two women stands confessed—it is a battle who shall win. During the harrowing scenes which follow the young girl cannot conceal her fears for her lover's safety, and thereby brings him to the very brink of ruin ; again and again this occurs, yet by the consummate tact and womanly courage of her rival all perils are at length safely tided over. Nevertheless love does not reason. Henri returns the affection of the one who, by her want of self-control, had so nearly be-

trayed him—he only feels *gratitude* to his benefactress, the preserver of his life.

But, truth to say, “if those only married who fall in love most people would die unwed”—for albeit romantic love is overpoweringly sweet, and endues the heart with the self-justifying conviction of a natural (or, if you will, a divine) ordinance, experience nevertheless proves in many a bitter lot that it is no sure guarantee for wedded felicity. Very possibly the comtesse would have made the better wife after all. But love has a lying tongue; it proposes to bridge all chasms, smooth all asperities, endure all manner of contretemps and jars. How it has failed, let many a divided hearth reply.

And why is marriage so often a failure? Why has it seemed necessary to write a book to tell married folk how they can be happy *though* married? Because, if the truth be told, the tender passion is in reality acting in the interests of a far wider purpose than the felicity of the individual or couple whose breast it agitates. It was not meant so much for these poor children of a day as for the undying race of whose perpetuation they are the unconscious instruments. Yet how shall two young people, who “having found out they care for each other more than for any one else in the world, have settled to pass their lives together”—how shall they understand that this inward flame of sweet emotion, which seems so truly theirs, is but the expedient of natural law, is but the emissary of a plan and purpose which, as we have seen, has quite other objects in view than the happiness of the individual?

But he who escapes the Love-god’s fiery shafts may go about the business in a more leisurely fashion, and it is perhaps well that the approaches to matrimony generally run in a more prosaic and matter-of-fact

groove, for, as before said, "if they only married who fell in love most people would die unwed." A man gets tired, then, of being a lonely, unrelated unit, a point lacking radii and circumference; he dreams of a family circle of which he shall be the centre, and, mindful of the saying that there is "no home without a wife," he casts about him for a life-companion. He will marry and found a home where he may lie down o' nights, and eat and drink, and look into another's eyes with the pleasing assurance, This is mine, this is my place, my site, seat or *sedes*; and—freighted with these convictions—it is not long before he encounters a girl whom, he thinks, all things considered, will do.

On the other hand, the girl, after seeing her young friends go off one by one—*omnes eodem cogimur*—becomes impatient. Example is terribly contagious; it fires the imagination, and eats the heart out of old routine. So this daughter of Eve grows restive of the tutelage of home; she thinks she too will wed, and thus "leaving all things for the stranger," she closes with an offer that would not perhaps have satisfied "love's young dream," for she never knows but that every chance may be the last.

And are not the snares of courtship and marriage most mightily seductive? It is so tremendously flattering that a fellow creature should place in your hand, as it were, his or her heart and all its issues, as if you were nothing less than an oracle. That you, who have perhaps not been so very much made of by sundry relatives and friends, should be singled out for this high honour—'tis enough to turn anybody's head.

And then the splendours of the marriage *fête*, the pride of being for once the cynosure of every eye, the supreme centre of interest—transfigured for one deli-

